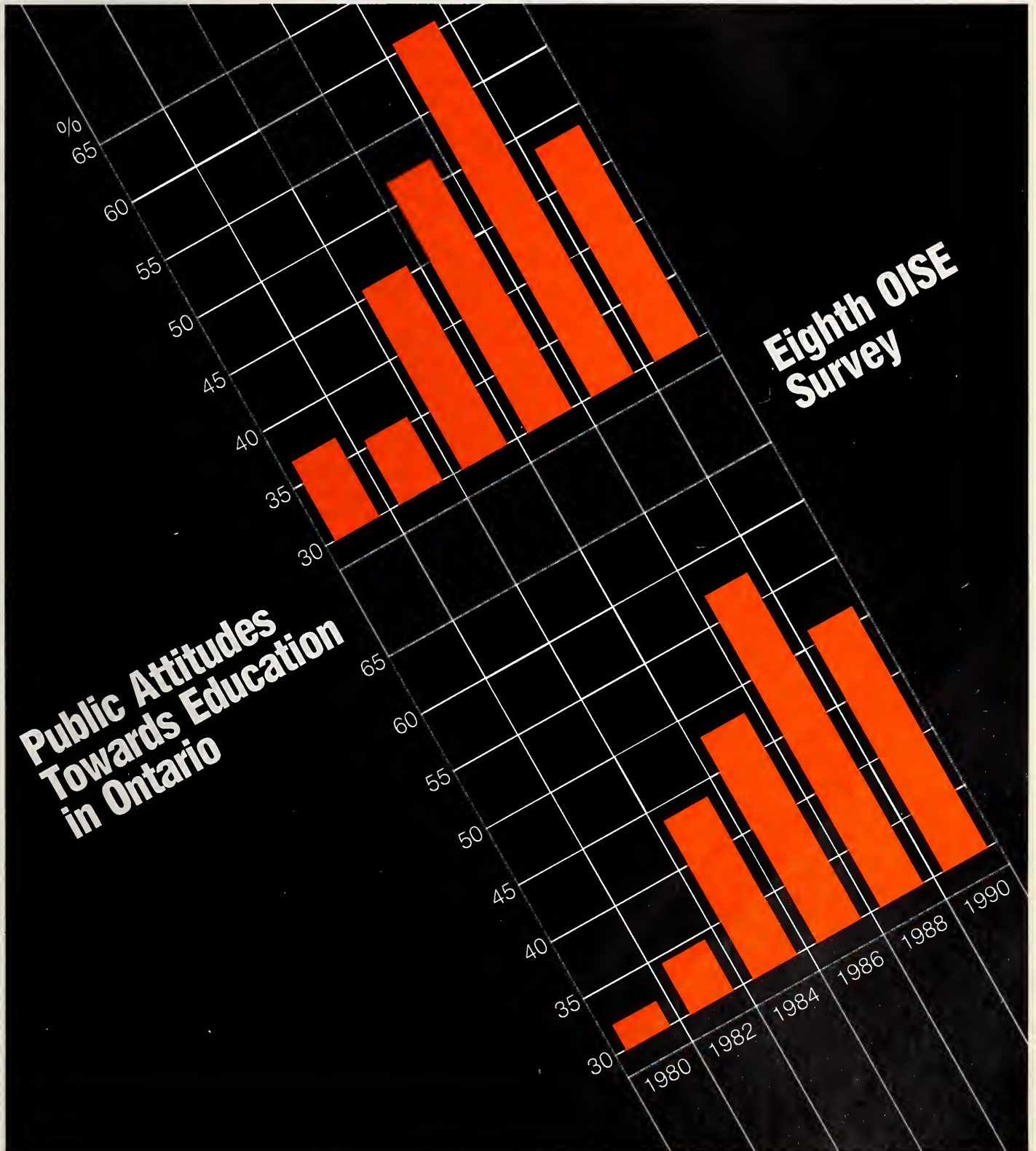


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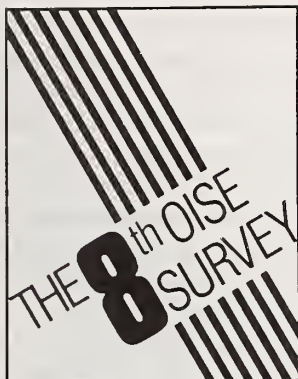
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Public Attitudes Towards Education in Ontario – 1990 THE EIGHTH OISE SURVEY

D. W. Livingstone, L. E. Davie, D. Hart

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Public Attitudes Towards Education in Ontario — 1990

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During 1990, the Select Legislative Committee on Education recommended the extension of daycare and reduction of class sizes in elementary schools as well as an increase in the provincial share of school funding. The federal government set up a national task force on education, and the Ontario Premier's Council and the Council of Regents of Ontario Colleges both released major education policy reports — all of which stressed the training of a globally competitive workforce. The September 6th election brought Ontario its first New Democratic Party government. During the campaign, central educational issues were funding problems, including the provincial share question, and how to adapt education programs to a changing technological society. This selective listing merely registers some of the events and media coverage that may have affected public sentiment in the context of our 1990 survey.

Education is one of the central areas of government policy-making. Awareness, among both citizens and officials, of general public sentiment on major educational issues is a vital element in democratic decision-making. Public opinion surveys are, in spite of well-documented limitations,¹ a reliable means for providing representative readings of public sentiment on political issues. The 1990 OISE Survey of Educational Issues is the eighth in a series which began in 1978.² It remains the only regularly administered public survey of public attitudes towards educational *policy* options in Canada.³ This survey provides both trend data and current profiles of public support for existing educational programs and proposed policy changes in Ontario.

The Survey Design

The 1990 OISE Survey involved a representative random sample of 1,032 adults, 18 years of age and over, who were interviewed in their residences across Ontario between September 17 and 22 by the Gal-

lup Canada polling agency. A supplementary sample of corporate executives (109 respondents) also replied to a mailed questionnaire during about the same period. A description of the sampling procedures and guidelines for interpreting statistical differences appear in the Appendix. Question wordings are presented in most of the following tables; the full questionnaire is available from the authors on request.

In reporting our 1990 findings, we refer whenever possible to comparable items from the previous OISE surveys as well as from other surveys. Responses to each question have been analyzed in relation to various general background variables. These factors include: age, sex, contact with the schools, educational attainment, religion, mother tongue, ethnicity, family income, occupational class, geographical region, and size of community. Only statistically significant differences on these factors are reported.

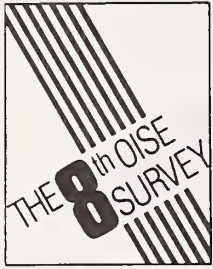
We are grateful to the wide variety of Ontario interest group representatives and individual citizens who have made suggestions to us over the past two years about relevant educational issues for the survey. The other members of our project staff, Bob Bowd, Richard Cope, Stephen Hooker, Kathy Jones, and Julia Pine, all provided valuable assistance.

Notes

1. On these limitations and further information about the design of the OISE survey series, see Livingstone, Hart, and Davie (1985). See also Bradburn and Sudman (1988) and Hoy (1989).

2. See Livingstone (1979), Livingstone and Hart (1980, 1981), Livingstone, Hart, and McLean (1983), and Livingstone, Hart and Davie (1985, 1987, 1989).

3. See Flower (1984), Reid (1986), and Williams and Millinoff (1990) for notable occasional Canada-wide education polls.



Satisfaction, Quality, and Curricular Balance

We begin this report of the Eighth OISE Survey with the results of our benchmark questions on public satisfaction with the school system in general, and public perceptions of what has happened to the quality of education in Ontario elementary and high schools. New this survey year is a question concerning the balance between academic and social problem content in the curriculum.

Satisfaction with the Public School System

The OISE Survey began tracking public satisfaction with the school system in general in 1979 against a background of Canadian Gallup Polls (using a different question wording) which appeared to indicate that satisfaction had declined during the 1970s (see Livingstone & Hart, 1980, p. 6). As shown in Table 1, our own results indicated that attitudes stabilized and may even have become more favourable to the schools in the early 1980s. A renewed decline in public satisfaction, however, characterized most of the decade. Between 1982 and 1988, the proportion of those declaring themselves satisfied with the school system fell from more than half to a little more than a third.

Our 1990 results suggest a reversal of this trend. Almost half of the respondents declared themselves satisfied with the school system; the proportion dissatisfied fell from 37 to 29 percent. In 1982, we suggested that the long term decline in public satisfaction might have bottomed out. While the reversal of opinion in 1990 is more substantial, we cautiously avoid a prediction of future opinion trends at this point.

Readers should note that information on opinion trends is often more meaningful than the actual levels of satisfaction in any

given year. Obtained levels of satisfaction (and other attitude measures) can be highly sensitive to differences in question wording and scales used. For example, on July 16th, 1990, Gallup Poll attained higher levels of satisfaction than our own results, based on a question on "services offered in your community" for elementary schools, using a scale without a "neither satisfied/dissatisfied" option (Bozinoff & MacIntosh, 1990).

Table 1 "How satisfied are you with the current situation in Ontario elementary and high schools with respect to the school system in general?"

	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Neither/ Not stated %	N
1979	50	30	20	1,084
1980	51	29	20	1,108
1982	55	24	21	1,050
1986	42	33	25	1,042
1988	36	37	28	1,011
1990	47	29	25	1,032

Less than a quarter of those 65 or older and only a third of the 55-64 age group indicate that they are satisfied with the schools. The proportion is 65 percent among 18-24 year olds and about half for the 25-54 age group which accounts for most parents of elementary and high school students. Because the least educated group (elementary school only) is numerically dominated by those 55 or older, the lower levels of satisfaction among older respondents are echoed here. However, above this level, educational attainment is not related to satisfaction.

Formal contact with the school system (as a parent of a student; more rarely, except

for the youngest age group, as a student oneself) is not related to satisfaction, with one important exception. Within the 35-54 age group, parents of students are more likely to indicate satisfaction than non-parents. Finally, corporate executives are more likely to express dissatisfaction than most employee groups; over half indicate that they are dissatisfied with the school system in general.

Those dissatisfied with the schools are somewhat less likely than those who are satisfied to be willing to pay more taxes for education, less likely to favour an increase in educational spending, and less likely to believe that spending more per pupil at the elementary level will have much effect on improving students academic progress. The dissatisfied are somewhat more likely to think that the public has too little say in how the schools are run. The dissatisfied are considerably more likely to think students are poorly prepared by the schools to make educational and career choices.

Perceptions of Changes in the Quality of Education

The OISE surveys have tracked perceptions of changes in the quality of education received by high school students since 1979. (Our question asks about changes over the last 10 years.) This question was first asked in a 1976 poll as part of the Secondary/Post Secondary Interface Study obtaining results almost identical to our 1979 findings (see Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1989). A parallel question on changes in the quality of elementary school education was added for the current survey. Results for both questions are shown in Table 2.

For high schools, our 1990 findings are virtually identical to those for the 1988 survey, and indicate at least a six-year period of stability in public perceptions of changing quality. In 1990, about one quarter of respondents think that the quality of education received by high school students has improved; a further quarter see no change, while 39 percent perceive a deterioration in quality. Perceptions of the quality of education received by elementary school students are slightly more favourable. Twenty-nine percent see improvement; about the same proportion think quality has declined.

Table 2 "Overall, would you say that the quality of education received by students . . ."

In Ontario high schools has:					
	Improved %	Remained the same %	Deteriorated %	Don't know/ Not stated %	N
1979	32	16	42	10	1,084
1984	28	17	37	18	1,046
1988	27	22	39	12	1,011
1990	25	24	39	12	1,032
In Ontario elementary schools has:					
1990	29	26	30	15	1,032

As in the case of satisfaction with schools, we caution that trends in perceptions may be more meaningful than percentage distributions for any given year, which can be sensitive to question wording. A 1990 CEA poll (Williams & Millinoff, 1990, p.8), for example, asked whether schools were better, worse, or the same as they were *five years* ago. The proportion seeing improvement (29 percent) is similar to our own results; however, a higher proportion thought schools had stayed the same (42 percent) while a smaller proportion saw deterioration (20 percent). In the U.S., 22 percent of respondents to a similar question thought the public schools had improved, 30 percent that they had gotten worse, and 36 that the schools had stayed about the same (Elam, 1990, p.53). A 1989 Gallup

poll (see Bozinoff & MacIntosh, Oct. 12, 1989) found that half of respondents in Ontario thought children today were better educated *than they themselves were*, while a third thought today's children were worse educated and only 11 percent saw no change. Time-series data for the Gallup question, however, also suggest that there has been little change in perceptions over most of the decade (Gallup Canada, 1983; Bozinoff & MacIntosh, October 1989).

In the 1990 survey, over 40 percent of those over 55 see deterioration in the quality of elementary school education. Less than 15 percent of 18-24 year olds hold this view. In the case of high school, those in the 18-24 age group hold distinctly positive views (only 23 percent see deterioration), but those over 55 hold views which differ little from others 25 or older.

Those seeing deterioration in the quality of either elementary or high school education are less likely than those who see improvement to be willing to pay more taxes for education, and more likely to think that the public has too little say in how schools are run. Those who see a deterioration in high school education are considerably more likely to think that students are poorly prepared by schools to make educational and career choices.

Satisfaction and Perceptions of Changing Quality

In our 1988 report, we noted that with the decline in satisfaction with the schools, satisfaction appeared to have become more

closely linked to perceptions of an improvement in the quality of (high school) education than was the case at the beginning of the decade. What we find in 1990 is that with the increase in public satisfaction, the relationship with perceptions of change in quality has become less close. Only 36 percent of those who see some deterioration are dissatisfied. As in 1979, only among those who think that there has been a great deal of deterioration are a majority (69 percent) dissatisfied. (The relationship between satisfaction and perceived change in the quality of elementary schooling is similar.)

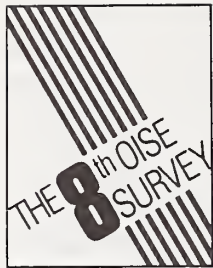
Curricular Balance of Academic and Social Problem Content

The 1990 Survey includes a new general question on the balance between academic and social problem content in the curriculum (see Table 3). Respondents were asked whether too little time is spent teaching students about social problems such as AIDS and drug abuse, or whether too much time is already being taken away from the basics. Almost half of respondents thought that too little time is being spent on social problems; a third, the right amount; and only 11 percent, too much time. Views of the youngest (18-24) age group are distinctive; 62 percent think too little time is spent on social problems, compared to 45-50 percent for all other age groups.

Table 3 "Some people think that the schools should spend more time teaching students about drugs, alcohol, AIDS and similar problems; others think too much time is already being taken away from the basics. Do you think too much, too little, or about the right amount of time is being spent teaching about these problems, such as drugs, alcohol and AIDS?"

	%
Too little	49
Right	33
Too much	11
Don't know/not stated	7
N	1,032





Educational Funding

How much the public is prepared to pay for education and what sources of funding are preferred are always basic issues. In addition to tracking our standard measures of Ontarians' support for funding public education, this survey pays special attention to recently proposed reforms regarding sources of revenue. Views on funding of educational activities of other non-educational public institutions are also assessed for the first time.

Size of Educational Expenditures

General findings on the desired size of government spending for all purposes, for

public education overall, and for specific types of education are summarized in Table 4. Overall, support for increased government funding beyond the rate of inflation has declined somewhat since 1988, but the majority continue to support increased education spending while remaining much less supportive of general government spending.

About a quarter would like to see government spending in general increase, while over 40 percent want it to keep up with inflation and more than a quarter would prefer decreased general spending. Although public support has dropped from the

higher levels recorded in 1988, roughly two-thirds support growth of general government spending at the level of inflation or higher, as Ontarians did earlier in the 1980s.

Support for increased educational spending is at least twice as strong as that for general government spending. A bare majority now prefer increased spending for education in general, nearly 40 percent want it to keep up with inflation, and 10 percent want decreased educational funding. Support for increased educational funding has dropped back to 1986 levels but remains higher than in all prior surveys dating back to the 1970s.

Public spending preferences for specific levels of the formal school system (elementary and high schools, community colleges, and universities) show similar patterns to education in general; that is, small majorities now favour increased spending at each level, with most of the remaining respondents wanting spending to keep up with inflation and small minorities wanting decreased spending. While there are possible recent declines in support for increased

Table 4 "What would you like to see happen to government spending for the following purposes?"

	Increase %	Keep up with inflation ¹ %	Decrease %	Not stated %	N		Increase %	Keep up with inflation ¹ %	Decrease %	Not stated %	N
Total spending for all purposes						For community colleges					
1984	26	42	29	3	1,046	1975 ^{2,3}	25	45	15	14	1,294
1986	25	40	28	6	1,042	1980	37	47	10	6	1,108
1988	38	45	15	3	1,011	1982	38	48	11	4	1,050
1990	25	43	29	3	1,032	1984	48	38	10	4	1,046
For all levels of education						1986	48	35	10	7	1,042
1979	35	43	17	5	1,084	1988	55	35	6	4	1,011
1980	36	50	10	4	1,108	1990	52	35	9	4	1,032
1982	35	53	11	2	1,050	For universities					
1984	46	40	11	3	1,046	1975 ^{2,3}	25	45	15	14	1,294
1986	52	34	11	3	1,042	1980	31	49	12	8	1,108
1988	61	32	5	1	1,011	1982	34	49	14	4	1,050
1990	50	38	10	2	1,032	1984	44	41	11	4	1,046
For elementary and high schools						1986	49	34	10	7	1,042
1975 ²	20	51	18	10	1,294	1988	57	33	6	4	1,011
1980	38	48	10	4	1,108	1990	52	35	9	4	1,032
1982	37	50	11	3	1,050	For job retraining					
1984	45	42	10	3	1,046	1984	70	19	7	3	1,046
1986	50	36	9	5	1,042	1986	73	16	8	3	1,042
1988	61	31	5	3	1,011	1988	68	24	6	3	1,011
1990	51	39	8	2	1,032	1990	66	24	7	3	1,032
						For adult training in reading and writing					
						1986	71	19	6	4	1,042
						1988	70	22	5	3	1,011
						1990	68	24	5	3	1,032

¹ In 1979, the middle option read, "Maintain at about the same level"; in later surveys, this was replaced by, "Just keep up with inflation."

² Source: D. Auld, "Public Sector Awareness and Preferences in Ontario," *Canadian Tax Journal* 27(2), (March-April 1979), p. 178.

³ Community colleges and universities combined.

spending at all three levels, this survey—in common with other recently published Ontario, Canadian, and international survey results (see British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989; Jowell et al., 1988; Poitras, 1990; Smith, 1989; Todd, 1990)—indicates very strong continuing support for increasing educational spending at the rate of inflation or beyond, and tiny stable minority support for decreasing funding.

Public support for increased spending on adult education, in the form of either job retraining or adult training in reading and writing, remains stronger than support for funding the formal school system and quite comparable to 1988 levels, with about two-thirds wanting to see increased funding.

The major social group differences in support for educational funding in Ontario are suggested by Table 5, which summarizes the significant differences in responses to spending “for all levels of education.” Definite majorities in age groups under 45 want increased education spending while only about a quarter of those over 55 do so. In terms of contact with schools, those attending school themselves or with children at elementary school are most supportive, while people without formal contact with schools tend to be least supportive. People with only elementary schooling themselves are much less likely than those with higher formal attainments to favour increased spending on schooling. Among occupational classes, corporate executives and the retired offer the weakest support for increased funding while students and the unemployed express the strongest support and majorities of most employee groups are also in favour of increases. In sum, the greatest opposition to increased educational spending is found among the older, least formally educated population, but even among these groups most people want educational spending to keep up with inflation.

Paying Education Taxes

One of the best indicators of the strength of public support for educational spending is people’s willingness to pay higher taxes for education. As Table 6 shows, the Ontario public remains quite equally divided on whether or not to pay more taxes in support of education. There may have been a mar-

Table 5 Preferred Size of Total Educational Expenditure by Background

	Increase %	Keep up with inflation %	Decrease %	Not stated %	N
All respondents	50	38	10	2	1,032
Age					
18 - 24	72	25	3	0	149
25 - 34	59	33	7	1	256
35 - 44	61	33	5	2	203
45 - 54	42	42	15	1	128
55 - 64	27	48	21	4	140
65 +	25	54	20	2	145
Contact with schools					
Self or spouse attending	77	12	12	0	27
Child at elementary only	65	30	4	2	218
Children at elementary and high school	58	37	5	0	74
Child at high school only	51	33	12	4	61
Child at postsecondary only	44	43	8	4	43
Children at postsecondary and other level	57	30	11	2	36
No formal contact	42	42	14	2	572
Education					
Elementary	18	51	27	4	99
High school incomplete	55	34	10	1	168
High school complete	48	42	8	2	252
Non-university postsecondary	54	36	10	1	225
University	58	33	8	1	285
Occupational class					
Corporate executives	32	47	16	5	109
Small employers	48	38	12	2	38
Self-employed	40	32	24	4	69
Managers	56	35	8	0	92
Professional employees	57	35	7	2	89
Supervisors	52	39	7	2	105
Service workers	61	31	6	2	113
Industrial workers	46	45	8	1	93
Homemakers	47	39	12	3	153
Unemployed	64	31	5	0	30
Retired	26	53	19	2	125
Students	71	23	6	0	75



ginal shift in favour of paying higher education taxes in recent years. Comparable U.S. surveys also suggest similar marginal gains in willingness to pay more taxes for education (Gallup & Elam, 1988). Our further analysis finds a very strong and growing association between support for increased educational spending and willingness to pay higher education taxes over the past two years in Ontario.

The majority of those under 45 express willingness to pay higher taxes, while only about a quarter of those over age 55 do so. Those with the least formal education are least willing to pay more education taxes. Among income groups, willingness to pay is becoming more polarized; the majority of those with family incomes under \$30,000 are opposed and majorities in all higher income groups are prepared to pay more

taxes in support of education. Of all occupational classes, corporate executives and the retired express the most reluctance to pay more taxes for education, while majorities of most employee groups are supportive, and students are most highly supportive. Thus, the social groups most likely to prefer increased educational spending generally also tend to be most willing to pay more taxes to achieve this result.

Table 6 "Would you or would you not be willing to pay more taxes in support of education?"

	Yes %	No %	Don't know/ Not stated %	N
All respondents				
1984 ¹	45	47	8	753
1988	48	48	4	1,011
1990	49	46	5	1,032
Age				
18 - 24	69	24	7	149
25 - 24	61	34	5	256
35 - 44	54	42	4	203
45 - 54	42	55	3	128
55 - 64	28	69	3	140
65 +	26	71	3	145
Education				
Elementary	25	73	2	99
High school incomplete	47	47	6	168
High school complete	50	46	4	252
Non-university postsecondary	50	46	4	225
University	59	38	5	285
Family income				
Under \$20,000	37	60	3	123
\$20,000 to \$29,999	37	60	3	115
\$30,000 to \$39,999	55	44	1	138
\$40,000 to \$59,999	55	42	3	217
\$60,000 to \$79,999	60	35	5	123
\$80,000 and over	58	39	3	118
Occupational class				
Corporate executives	25	69	6	109
Small employers	55	43	2	38
Self-employed	39	57	4	69
Managers	54	41	5	92
Professional employees	55	36	10	89
Supervisors	53	44	3	105
Service workers	61	34	5	113
Industrial workers	44	50	5	93
Homemakers	45	52	3	153
Unemployed	57	41	2	30
Retired	22	75	3	125
Students	72	22	6	75

¹ From the 1984 CEA poll of Canadian opinion on education; see George Flower, *Speaking Out*, Canadian Education Association: Toronto, 1984.

Funding Sources

While critics of social policy polling have frequently asserted that mass publics always want more services for less taxes, the relevant research indicates that people tend to make more complex trade-offs on these matters (see Goldfarb, 1985; Welch, 1985). It is clear that Ontarians and other Canadians recently have been strongly opposed to tax cuts tied to reductions in government services such as education and health care (Bozinoff & MacIntosh, 1988; Todd, 1990). The sorts of trade-offs that Ontarians would prefer to make in order to increase government spending on education — in a period of widely heralded fiscal constraint — are suggested by Table 7.

Only tiny minorities would prefer to either increase taxes or increase the government deficit, while the overwhelming majority would choose to reduce spending in other areas. Even the majority of those who are willing to pay more education taxes strongly favour the reduction of non-education spending over increased taxes. Earlier Ontario surveys have consistently found education and health care to be people's top

Table 7 "If government spending on education were increased, which one of the following would be the best way to finance this?"

	%	N
Reduce spending in other areas	83	856
Increase the government deficit; that is, borrowing by government	5	49
Increase taxes	8	85
Don't know	4	42

fiscal priorities (see Goldfarb, 1985; Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1984). But more detailed questions would be required to identify preferred specific areas for any actual spending reductions.

With regard to which specific revenue sources are favoured for funding public education, the most widely debated issue recently has been the role of provincially raised taxes versus local property taxes. As Table 8 shows, the majority of respondents now favour increasing the provincial share of educational funding while about a quarter oppose increasing the provincial share and one-fifth are uncertain. There appears to be growing support over the past decade for increasing the provincial share and reducing the role of property taxes.

As Table 8 also indicates, younger people tend to be more in favour of increasing the provincial share while those over 65 are most divided. The more highly educated are also more likely to favour an increased provincial share. Higher income groups (over \$60,000) are more likely to want to increase the provincial share and reduce property taxes than the poorest (under \$20,000). Further analysis indicates that a strong majority of those who are prepared to pay more taxes for education are more likely to favour provincial taxes over property taxes while those who are not willing to pay more are quite divided on this issue.

A more specific proposal to reform funding sources for public education is the replacement of residential property taxes on households and farms by an education tax on personal incomes (Commission on the Funding of Elementary and Secondary Education in Ontario, 1985). Current public opinions on this issue are summarized in Table 9. The Ontario public appears to be quite divided, with roughly equal minorities favouring and opposing an income tax and about a quarter expressing uncertainty. This pattern prevails across nearly all social background groupings. (A notable exception are corporate executives, the majority of whom oppose replacing property taxes by income taxes.)

The most controversial educational funding issue in the past decade undoubtedly was the extension of government funding of Catholic separate schools from Grade 10 to the end of high school. Our prior

Table 8 "Would you favour or oppose an increase in provincial taxes and a reduction in property taxes, in order that the provincial government pay a greater share of school expenses?"

	Favour %	Oppose %	Don't know/ Doesn't matter	N
All respondents				
1979 ¹	34	43	22	1,080
1988	52	30	19	1,011
1990	55	27	18	1,032
Age				
18 - 24	65	19	16	149
25 - 34	54	30	16	256
35 - 44	63	21	16	203
45 - 54	53	29	18	128
55 - 64	49	31	19	140
65 +	42	35	23	145
Education				
Elementary	42	31	27	99
High school incomplete	50	35	15	168
High school complete	55	27	18	252
Non-university postsecondary	59	23	18	225
University	59	24	17	285
Family income				
Under \$20,000	44	36	20	123
\$20,000 to \$29,999	52	37	11	115
\$30,000 to \$39,999	57	26	17	138
\$40,000 to \$59,999	56	25	19	217
\$60,000 to \$79,999	61	24	15	123
\$80,000 +	66	19	15	118
Would pay more taxes for education				
Yes	68	18	14	505
No	42	37	20	478

¹ Ontario Ministry of Education, *Attitudes of the Public Toward Schools in Ontario*. Toronto: MOE, 1979.

Table 9 Education Taxes on Personal Incomes and Separate School Share of Commercial Taxes

	Agree %	Disagree %	Neither/ Don't know %	N
"Property taxes on households and farms should be replaced by an education tax on personal incomes"	36	40	24	1,032
"Catholic separate school boards' share of the education property taxes paid by business and industry should be increased to the same proportion as Catholic boards' share of household property taxes"	51	22	27	1,032

surveys indicated that the Ontario public remained deeply divided on this issue even after its implementation (see Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1989). A major continuing issue has been whether Catholic school boards should be granted an increased share of commercial property taxes paid by local business and industry.

As Table 9 summarizes, a small majority of all Ontarians now support increasing the Catholic boards' share of the commercial property tax pool to the same proportions as their residential property tax share; less than a quarter express definite opposition while more than a quarter are uncertain. There are significant, predictable differences here along religious, linguistic, and ethnic lines, with Catholic, French mother tongue, and French ethnic group members expressing strong majority support. But there is at least strong plurality support for this proposition among those with definite opinions in nearly all linguistic, religious, and ethnic groups.

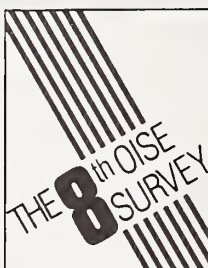
Funding Cultural Education Outside the Schools

The people of Ontario have expressed a growing appreciation of the educational functions and potentials of other institutions beyond the formal school system (see Special Committee for the Arts, 1984). Among these institutions currently funded by government, those with the broadest educational mandate in a general cultural sense include public art galleries, science centres, and museums.

Table 10 summarizes current public views on the funding of educational programs for both students and adults in such institutions. In both instances, the general public is equally divided over increasing or maintaining current levels of funding for such general cultural education, but there is only a small minority prepared to decrease such funding. There are some strong social background differences here, by age, school contact, educational attainment, and occupational class. But since these differences, in terms of greater support among younger, more highly educated people in direct contact with schools, are extremely similar to those appearing in Table 5 on support for the size of education funding in general, they are not reported here.

Table 10 "What would you like to see happen to government funding for public art galleries, science centres and museums for educational purposes?"

	Increase %	Keep up with inflation %	Decrease %	Not stated %	N
Educational programs for students	41	43	15	1	1,032
Educational programs for adults	40	42	17	1	1,032



Improving Services and Assessing Progress in Early Schooling

In 1990, we focussed more attention on elementary level education than in previous years. The 1990 survey included a series of questions reflecting policy proposals or policy changes for the earliest years of schooling.

Child Care Centres in Schools

As shown in Table 11, opinion is sharply divided on making tax-supported child care available to all pre-school children as part of the public school system. A narrow majority support the proposal; 45 percent are opposed. In the U.S., opinion on the same issue has been even more closely divided and has remained so over the period from 1976 to 1985 (see A.M. Gallup, 1985).

While no time series data are available for Ontario (or Canada), the Canadian Gallup Poll asked a related question, "Do you favour or oppose increased tax spending to provide government subsidized daycare centres for pre-school children?" In March 1988, 57 percent of Ontario respondents supported providing tax-supported daycare centres while 39 percent were opposed. In August 1989, 45 percent were in favour while 48 percent were opposed (Gallup Canada, 1988; see also

Bozinoff & MacIntosh, August 1989). Given the results of our own survey, it is unlikely that this represents a trend to oppose support for subsidized daycare.

The overriding pattern, both here and in the U.S., is of a sharp, persistent division of opinion. It seems, however, that it is the matter of the tax support which is contentious. Decima polls from 1983 through 1987 have found a large majority in favour of making daycare services available to anyone who wants them (Gregg & Posner, 1990, p.141).

Table 11 "A proposal has been made to make child care centres available to all preschool children as part of the public school system. This program would be supported by taxes. How strongly would you favour or oppose such a program in your school board?"

	%
Favour	53
Oppose	45
Don't know/Not stated	2
N	1,032

Support for tax-supported daycare centres as part of the public school system is strongly linked to age. Three-quarters of those in the 18-24 age group support the proposal compared to less than a third of those 65 and older. Support is also higher among those who have contact with the school system, mainly parents of children in elementary school who have likely confronted problems of daycare quite recently. A majority of those with elementary education, a group mainly over age 55, oppose the daycare centre proposal, the only educational group in which this occurs. Over three-quarters of corporate executives oppose tax-supported daycare centres as part of the public school system, while majorities of all other occupational categories, except the self-employed and the retired, support the proposal. Neither sex nor family income level is associated with differences on this issue. However support is higher in Metro Toronto and outskirts than in small communities (population less than 10,000).

Ways of Improving Children's Progress in the Early Grades

Table 12 indicates public evaluation of the effectiveness of smaller class sizes, more money spent per pupil, and starting school at an earlier age as means for improving children's progress in the early grades.

Table 12 "How much effect do you think each of the following would have in improving children's progress in the early years of elementary school?"

	A great deal %	A fair amount %	Not very much/None %	Don't know/ Not stated %	N
Smaller class sizes	57	31	11	1	1,032
More money spent per student	17	34	46	4	1,032
Starting school at an early age	8	14	76	2	1,032

Smaller class sizes and earlier starting grade (through extension of kindergarten) have been the subject of recent policy changes. Per pupil spending, as a gross indicator of available educational resources, is a frequent focus of policy debates, particularly those concerning issues of equity among boards in different geographical areas and between the public and separate school systems.

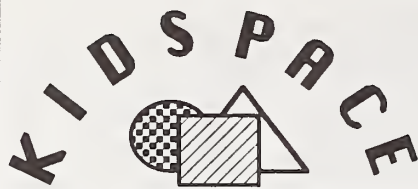
Smaller class size is almost universally regarded as making a difference. Over half of those polled think this change would have "a great deal" of effect; a further 31 percent think it would have "a fair amount." At the other extreme, three-quarters of respondents think that starting school at an earlier age would have "not very much" or no effect at all on children's progress.

Opinion on spending more money per pupil (without specification of resources thereby attained) is intermediate between these extremes. A bare majority think it would have a "fair amount" or "great deal" of effect. The extent of belief in the effectiveness of smaller class sizes in improving students' progress parallels findings of U.S. Gallup polls since the early 1970s (see S.M. Elam & A.M. Gallup, 1989, p.45) and recent British poll results (Jowell, et al., 1988, p.227).

Older respondents, particularly those over 65, are the least likely to think that any of the cited changes would improve students' progress. Those 65 and over are the only age group where a majority do not think smaller classes would have a great deal of effect. Only 30 percent of the same age group think spending more money per pupil could have a least "a fair amount" of effect, compared to over 60 percent of 18-24 year-olds. There are only minor age differences of opinion, in the same direction, regarding starting grade.

Women are more likely than men (65 versus 48 percent) to think smaller class sizes would make a great deal of difference, but their opinions do not differ on the effectiveness of money spent per pupil or starting grade. Finally, less than half of the corporate executives, small employers, and the self-employed who were polled think smaller classes would have a great deal of effect in contrast to most other occupational groups. Over three-quarters of corporate executives think spending more money per student would have not much or no effect at all, a view distinct from most others except the retired.





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Student Assessment at the Elementary Level

Past OISE surveys have included two questions on student assessment — an agree/disagree question on use of province-wide tests at the high school level, and a more complex question on the best way to assess student progress “in the higher grades” which, in context, means at the high school level. The 1990 survey asked these same questions regarding student assessment at the elementary level. The results are shown in Tables 13 and 14.

Our questions in prior surveys about student assessment at the high school level have yielded two main findings. The first result fits the conventional wisdom on public opinion regarding student assessment: by a substantial majority, the public favours use of province-made tests to assess individual student performance at the high school level (see Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1989, p.20). The second finding, however, represents a major qualification of the first; only a small minority, 11-12 percent, think that the best way to assess the

academic progress of high school students is to make province-wide tests most important (Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1989, p.21).

Our current findings for student assessment at the elementary level are similar. A majority (59 percent) agree that province-made tests should be used to assess the individual performance of students at the elementary level. However, less than one in ten think that relying mainly on such tests is the best way to assess students. If we add to this those who think that using province-wide tests to supplement teacher-made tests is the best assessment strategy, we still fall short of a majority.

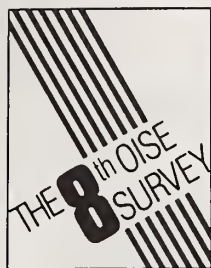
The university educated are more likely than those with less than high school education to select provincial tests as supplements for teacher-made tests as the best method of assessment, but are not more supportive, overall, of using province-wide tests. Corporate executives are somewhat more likely than most other occupational groups to select a “best” method of assessment which includes use of province-wide tests.

Table 13 “Province-wide tests should be used to assess the individual performance . . .”

	Agree %	Disagree %	Neither/ Not stated %	N
of elementary school students 1990	59	29	12	1,032
of high school students 1984	66	20	14	1,046
1988	62	23	16	1,011

Table 14 “Which one of the following do you think is the best way of judging the academic progress of students in elementary school?”

	%
The individual teacher should have sole responsibility for making assessments	20
Assessments should be based on tests set jointly by teachers in the school	34
Provincial tests should be used to supplement teacher-made tests	35
Provincial tests should be most important	9
Don't know/Not stated	3
N	1,032



Education Outside Schools



We explore the attitudes of the public towards the relationship between various cultural institutions and the school. Although there are clear differences among the perceptions relating to specific cultural institutions, we are impressed by the high level of public support for the educational role of these institutions.

Educational Role of Cultural Institutions

Table 15 reports the public's attitude towards the educational role of seven different types of cultural institutions. For each institution, only a small minority of respondents indicate that the educational role should decrease. Combining the "increase" and "stay the same" categories, public support is the highest for the educational role of the public libraries and science centres, followed closely by museums and historic sites. Art galleries, theatres, and orchestras have less support, but in every case at least three out of four respondents feel that the educational role should increase or stay the same.

The findings for the public libraries show that 66 percent of respondents feel that the educational role should increase. This is much higher than the science centres which

is next at 53 percent. These two institutions, while highly valued, are seen as needing the greatest increase in their educational roles. The primary response for the remaining cultural institutions indicates a wish that their educational role stay the same.

Formal educational attainment is related to support for every cultural institution. Simply stated, the higher the reported edu-

cational level, the higher the support for the educational role of cultural institutions; but support is strong even among the least formally educated.

Importance of Cultural Institutions for Elementary Students

Another way to look at the importance of the educational role of cultural institutions is to examine the importance given to including exposure to the cultural institution while students are still in elementary school. Table 16 examines the importance attributed to seven different cultural institutions. Every institution receives a majority support for elementary students to experience the cultural institution. Looking at the "very important" category, public libraries receive the highest support, while theatres receive the least support.

Table 15 "Do you think that the role of each of the following institutions in educating students should increase, stay the same or decrease?"

	Increase %	Stay the same %	Decrease %	Not stated %	N
Libraries	66	29	4	1	1,032
Science centres	53	38	7	2	1,032
Historic sites	36	49	13	2	1,032
Museums	32	53	13	2	1,032
Orchestras	25	53	18	4	1,032
Theatres	23	55	19	3	1,032
Art galleries	19	59	19	3	1,032

Table 16 "How Important do you think it is that students experience each of the following before they are out of elementary school?"

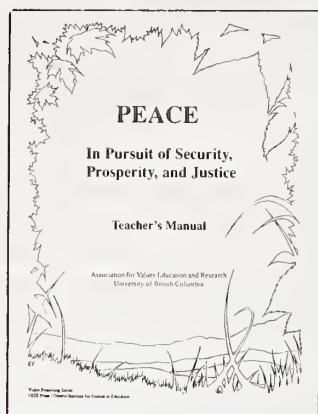
	Very important %	Fairly important %	Not very/Not important %	Not stated %	N
Libraries	75	22	3	1	1,032
Wildlife preserves	48	41	11	1	1,032
Historic sites	25	50	25	1	1,032
Museums	21	55	24	1	1,032
Educational TV	21	50	27	1	1,032
Art galleries	15	45	40	1	1,032
Theatres	12	39	48	1	1,032



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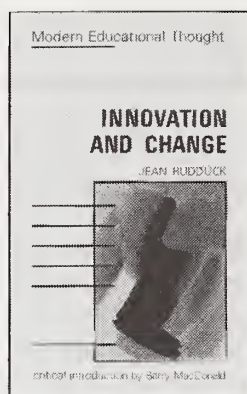
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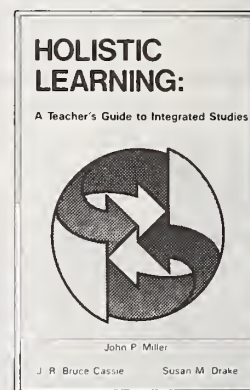


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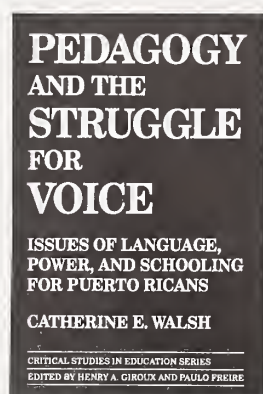
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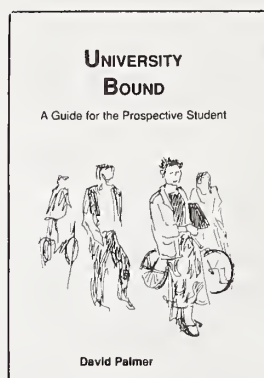
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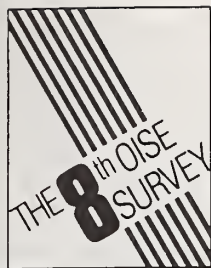
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Streaming

The issues of differential treatment of students from different social origins and of various learning capacities, as well as the more specific matter of streaming into different programs, have been extensively aired in recent years, most notably through the Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts (Radwanski, 1987) and the ensuing Select Committee on Education hearings (Porter & Gardner, 1988). Public opinion on these issues has been carefully assessed in prior surveys (see Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1987, 1989). In the present survey, we have focussed on a general issue, namely class bias in the schools, as well as on the timing of high school streaming.

As Table 17 shows, the Ontario public's perceptions of the extent of bias in the schools against students from working class families seem to be about as divided today as they were a decade ago. A small majority now perceive at least some extent of bias against working class students, perhaps up marginally from 1980; but about 40 percent think that schools are either neutral in their treatment of students or especially sensitive to working class children, a very slight decline since 1980. Most social groups exhibit this same pattern, with at least strong pluralities perceiving class bias in the schools. The only notable exception is among occupational classes, with corporate executives being less likely than most others to perceive the existence of class bias in the schools.

Our previous survey indicated that the Ontario public was deeply divided and uncertain about whether to move to a common curriculum for all high school students or to retain advanced, general, and

basic program streams (Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1989). Since then, policy debate has focussed on the more specific issue of the timing of streaming high school students into different programs, and Ontario government policy has recommended that such streaming be deferred from Grade 9 to Grade 10.

Table 18 summarizes public opinion on this issue during the past decade. A very small but growing minority support entirely eliminating program streaming from high schools, but majorities in each of the past two surveys support deferring streaming until Grade 10 or later. Support for streaming by Grade 9 or earlier has declined slightly since the early 1980s. There

are no social background groups that appear to hold particularly united views on this issue.

A major rationale for deferring streaming to Grade 10 has been to reduce the student dropout rate (Radwanski, 1987). Public views on the likely effectiveness of this program change are displayed in Table 19. A plurality of Ontarians feel that this measure would reduce dropouts, but only a slightly smaller proportion do not think so. Virtually all social groups are similarly divided on this issue, suggesting widespread public recognition of factors outside the schools, in addition to school programs, as major influences on dropping out (compare Karp, 1988).

Table 17 "Some people claim that schools have a class bias that makes it difficult for students from working class families to succeed. To what extent, if any, do you think that there is a class bias in Ontario schools?"

	Great or some extent %	None/Schools neutral or sensitive %	Not stated %	N
All respondents				
1980	49	42	9	1,108
1990	52	38	10	1,032

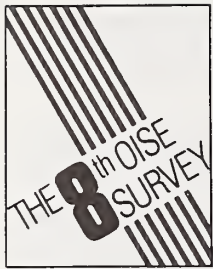
Table 18 "At what grade, if at all, should the schools stream or separate students into different programs intended to prepare some students directly for the world of work, and other students for entry into community college or university?"

	Not at all %	Grade 12 or 13 %	Grade 11 %	Grade 10 %	Grade 9 or earlier %	Don't know/Not stated %	N
All respondents							
1980	5	12	18	21	39	5	1,108
1982	7	19	16	17	36	5	1,050
1988	10	16	17	20	30	8	1,011
1990	13	15	15	20	32	5	1,032

Table 19 "Do you think streaming students at grade 10 rather than grade 9 would lead fewer students to drop out of high school before graduation?"

	Yes %	No %	Don't know %	N
All respondents	47	41	12	1,032

The 8th OISE Survey continues on page 15



L'enquête 1990 de l'IEPO sur l'éducation ontarienne

Natalie Beausoleil

Adjointe de recherche et agente d'information au Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne (CREFO)

L'enquête 1990 de l'Institut d'études pédagogiques de l'Ontario (IEPO) montre l'importance toujours croissante que les Ontariennes et Ontariens accordent à l'éducation permanente. De plus, la plupart voudraient que s'accroisse la participation du gouvernement provincial au financement du système scolaire.

Menée par les professeurs David Livingstone et Lynn Davie et l'adjoint de recherche Doug Hart, cette étude est la huitième du genre effectuée par l'IEPO depuis 1978. Le sondage à la base de cette étude est composé de 1032 adultes de 18 ans et plus, interviewés à leur domicile partout en Ontario entre les 17 et 22 septembre par la firme de sondage canadienne Gallup. Durant la même période, un échantillon de dirigeants d'entreprises a répondu à un questionnaire par courrier. Les résultats du sondage principal ont une marge d'erreur de 4 pour cent dans 95 pour cent des cas.

Le rapport du sondage est organisé en fonction des thèmes principaux abordés dans le questionnaire : évaluation générale des écoles; préférences de financement; éducation élémentaire et préscolaire et évaluation étudiante; éducation en dehors du système scolaire; répartition des étudiantes et étudiants en classes homogènes à l'école secondaire, et préjugés de classe dans les écoles; information et décisions pour un choix de carrière; accès à l'éducation postsecondaire; formation à l'emploi; équité d'emploi; aspects politiques de l'éducation; et éducation des adultes. Voici quelques-unes des conclusions de cette étude.

Une «culture de l'éducation permanente»

Selon les auteurs du rapport, l'enquête 1990 met en évidence l'émergence d'une «culture de l'éducation permanente» en Ontario. C'est-à-dire que les Ontariennes et Ontariens considèrent fondamental l'accès de masse à l'éducation dans divers lieux de formation, et ce, tout au long de la vie. L'importance accordée à l'éducation permanente s'inscrit dans un contexte caractérisé par la «foi» des Ontariennes et Ontariens envers l'éducation en général. Ainsi, leur confiance envers le système scolaire continue d'augmenter alors qu'elle diminue en ce qui a trait à l'église et à d'autres institutions. Des raisons d'ordre économique sous-tendent largement l'importance accordée à l'éducation. La participation à l'éducation des adultes, ou formation continue, est passée de 20 à 30 pour cent de 1986 à 1990.

Le financement de l'éducation

Alors que la majorité des Ontariennes et Ontariens continuent à appuyer les subventions accrues à tous les niveaux d'éducation, un plus grand nombre de personnes demandent des dépenses accrues dans les domaines de l'alphabétisation et du recyclage des adultes. De plus, la plupart des Ontariennes et Ontariens souhaitent que l'augmentation des dépenses gouvernementales en éducation soit compensée par la réduction de dépenses gouvernementales dans d'autres domaines.

À propos de l'épineuse question du financement des écoles catholiques séparées après la 10^e année, la population ontarienne demeure divisée, même si cette mesure est déjà en place. Une mince majorité (51 %) des Ontariennes et Ontariens appuient

maintenant l'augmentation des taxes commerciales pour les subventions aux écoles catholiques séparées proportionnellement aux taxes résidentielles. Moins d'un quart de la population (22 %) s'oppose à cette proposition alors que plus d'un quart des personnes sont incertaines. Les francophones sont en large majorité en faveur de cette politique : 82 % des francophones sont en faveur, 8 % sont en désaccord et 10 % sont incertains (chez les anglophones, la proportion est de 49 % en faveur, 23 % qui s'y opposent, et 23 % qui sont incertains).

Les Ontariennes et Ontariens sont nettement divisés quant au remplacement des taxes résidentielles par des impôts sur le revenu, et cela dans toutes les classes sociales, sauf chez les dirigeants d'entreprises qui s'y opposent clairement.

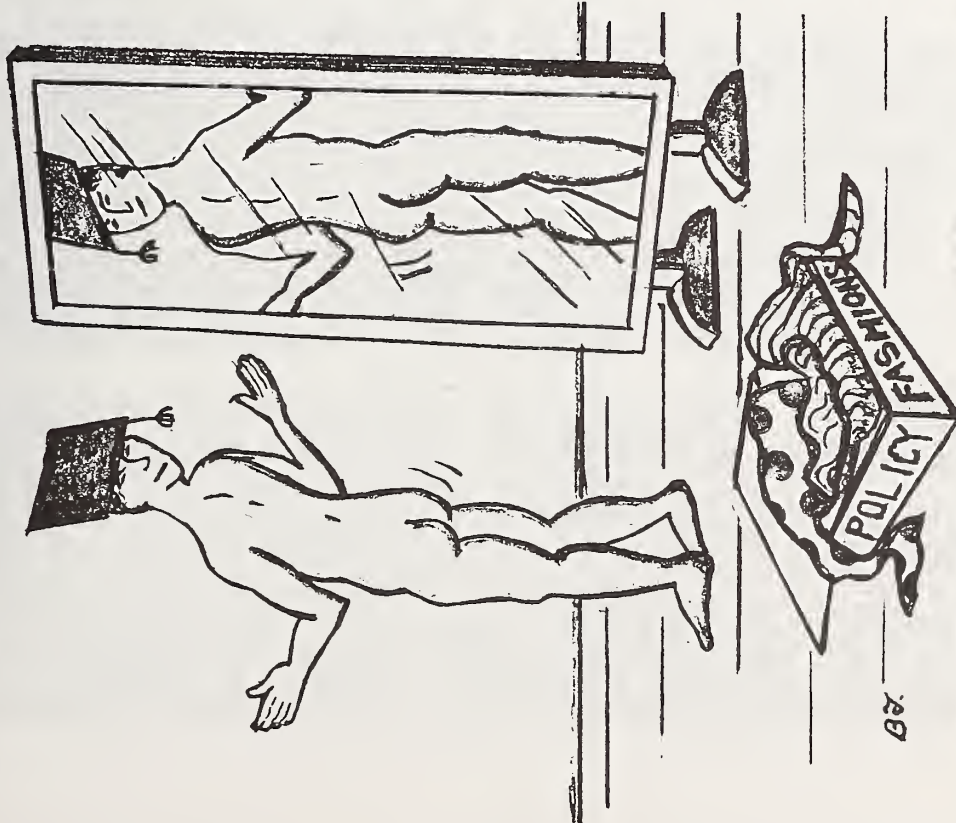
Qualité, satisfaction, et stratification

La satisfaction des répondants envers le système scolaire en général a augmenté sensiblement depuis deux ans. En 1988, à peine une personne sur trois se disait satisfaite, tandis que presque la moitié des personnes se déclarent satisfaites en 1990. À une nouvelle question de l'enquête de l'IEPO sur les contenus des cours, presque la moitié des participants répondent qu'il n'y a pas assez de temps consacré à l'étude des problèmes sociaux tels que le SIDA et la drogue.

Plus de la moitié des Ontariennes et Ontariens déclarent que l'éducation ontarienne témoigne d'un préjugé de classe envers les étudiantes et étudiants de la classe ouvrière. De plus, une large et croissante majorité souhaite que soit retardée la répartition en classes homogènes jusqu'en 10^e année ou ultérieurement.

Près de la moitié des répondants croient que les femmes diplômées de collèges et universités n'obtiennent pas d'aussi bons emplois que leurs collègues masculins, tandis qu'un peu plus du tiers croient que l'équité salariale est maintenant fait accompli. Environ la moitié des répondants appuient l'action positive dans l'embauche des femmes comme directrices d'écoles. Une majorité croissante de personnes croient que le public ontarien n'a pas assez de pouvoir décisionnel en ce qui a trait à l'organisation des écoles.

BACK TO THE BASICS



82

TALES

from the Schools

Contexts of Policy Action

began describing his sister as a student who was withdrawn, lacking in confidence, and making little progress academically in grade 2.

In response, Mother talked about herself. She described her life of drudgery, getting up at 5:00 a.m., getting home at 7:00 p.m., working in a factory, living with a husband whom she inferred was abusive, feeling sorry for her young daughter who had a lot of responsibility around the house, all to the incessant tune of a blaring television. Although Clementine was rarely mentioned during that 20-minute conference, I felt I'd learned much about her and couldn't help wondering silently about the adorable looking little fellow who held tightly to his Mom. After I talked to Mrs. Humes about the workings of the nearest family counselling clinic, she sighed and said that she'd consider it if her husband would accept.

She also nodded politely at my suggestions about possible guidelines for watching TV, ways to include family reading in the daily schedule, and strategies for building Clementine's sense of self-worth. Then our time was up, and so "Thanks for coming!"

I received no communication afterwards from the Children's Centre verifying contact with this family, and Mother never came back to see me again.

I next met Marland again when he was a student in my grade 1 class. He arrived in September with his new clothes, new lunch pail, and face that told nothing. Marland was reluctant to speak, had difficulty follow-

ing the direction of lessons, and found learning a challenge.

One day, after some probing, he told me, "My Mom gone back home and she never goin' to come back." He went on to elaborate, "My Dad got a new girlfriend." The end. And then about a month before Christmas, Marland came to our classroom wearing a seldom-seen sparkle in his eyes. It soon became evident that he was clutching a card tightly in his fist. He had received a Christmas card from his Mom! A card from his Mom! He set it up on the corner of his desk and coveted it throughout the day. At 3:30, he was taking a long time to leave the class. I didn't realize he was going to leave it at school. Finally, all dressed, he slowly walked toward his desk. Like a brave little soldier, he picked up the card, hugged it and kissed it, and held it for about five minutes. "I love you, Mommy." He laid the card down and shuffled out.

Father Knows

It seemed to take an eternity to get Father to come to school but finally about a week before Christmas, he appeared at my door. A big-mouthed, obnoxious, brazen, uncaring hulk? Not at all. He was a soft-spoken, seemingly defeated individual. He stated quietly that he knew this situation was very hard on Marland and he was trying to make a good life for his family. I breathed a small sigh of relief. He elaborated, "I tell him each day that she was a very bad person and that she never comin'



A SAY IN THE LIFE

Creating a delinquent

by DEVYN MITCHELL

THIS tale begins in the home -- as tales of the schools do.

A mother has had enough. Father watching TV every minute he's not at the factory or beating her. "You know the rule," he says, "don't be buggin' me." Her seven-year-old daughter, "Clementine," is withdrawn and almost afraid to open her mouth. Her son, "Marland," who celebrated his fifth birthday last week, just called her a "bitch." It's been this way ever since she can remember. She's afraid to go, she's afraid to stay. She can't take the kids, she can't leave the kids. In the end, she went back to her native country.

This is about Marland who was left behind.

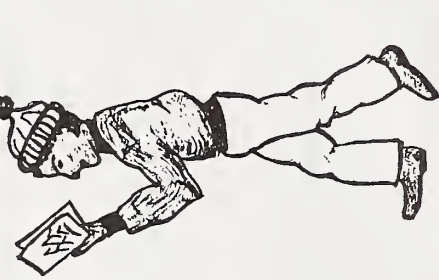
The first time I met Marland, he was an adorable two-year-old toddler who accompanied his Mommy to his sister Clementine's interview. He stood beside "Mrs. Humes," like a little doll with his shiny skin, big eyes, and boxy stature. I

back." Oh my God! I suggested family counselling on every other occasion that I could that year but the more I contacted him, the more he stated quietly but firmly that now that she was gone, everything at home was just fine.

Meanwhile, back in class

Marland and I were becoming very close. He was starting to take a little interest in me as his teacher and I, as his teacher, was taking a great deal of interest in him. Marland and I came to share many special moments as all grade 1 students do with their teachers. Gradually he started to join school activities, playing more often with other children. Rarely did we see him smile but every once in a while, I felt that he was happy at school. He began coming to me for hugs and to remind me of special things I'd said, such as, "You like the way I throw the ball, don't you?" "You said I did good printing today, didn't you?"

When the last day of school arrives, it is always difficult to say good-bye to little ones who have been so transparent: they've hugged you, broken down and cried on you, and giggled with you. This time, after all the farewells, I sat at my desk and to my surprise Marland came back into class. He hung around my desk and I chattered away to him. Suddenly, this six-year-old jumped up on my lap and clung to me so tightly that I could hardly breathe. He was trying to kiss me so hard on the mouth that I actually had to wrench his arms free from my neck and physically pull him back so that I could look into his face. Then his whole



When Marland came to my class that September, his body language said a lot as he slumped into his chair trying to look cool in this grade 6 prison. After three days and several small but significant incidents later, I came to realize that poor little Marland was now housed in the body of a surly, defiant 11-year-old boy whose manner told the world not to mess with him. The hope was that that didn't include me.

On the fourth day, when keeping him after school to talk, I discovered how wrong I was. I was recalling some good things about his grade 1, remarking how happy I was to have him as a student again. When he grunted in response, I understood that his verbal ability was very low and so I let that matter go for the moment. Then, I started to talk to him about some of his behaviours in the classroom that were of concern to me, specifically not doing as he was asked to do and not completing any work. Looking into the once-warm eyes, I met an expressionless wall. Midway through my remarks, Marland walked out. I yelled after him, "Marland, come

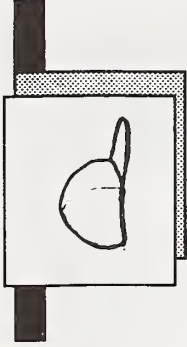
The principal came on strong and let the Father know that parents had to co-operate with teachers if students were to make any gains. The principal said that it was our professional opinion that counselling would be beneficial both for Marland and for Father in dealing with him. Father responded that he understood what the principal had said but what went on at home was "not the school's business."

"Isn't there *something* we can do?" I persisted after Father had gone. "Doesn't our Board have mental health experts? Can't they deal with parents so changes can occur in the home? Can't the Board establish parent groups to share ideas for success?"

"No, the County is not into that yet," the principal replied. "But look at it this way, you only have him for another four months. Then he'll be somebody else's problem."

From that point forward, Marland's behaviour became worse; fights in the classroom, harassment of female students, Marland's defiance, and Father's accusations of racism were documented. Then in June, Marland received a half-time behavioural placement which would start the following fall. He was walking a predictable line that led to future placement in basic education programs and probably an ultimate decision to drop out of school entirely.

Though it was late in the day, I felt strongly that this was the best placement for him, hoping the program would tap professional support for families. This was not the case. At that time, the role of the parents was



HATS OFF

About standing on guard

by CATHERINE FORSYTH

THE young energy is kinesthetic, the language colorful, the jostling physical, and suddenly it's ended. The bell has rung. The P.A. begins, "Good Morning. It's Monday, Day Two on your timetable. Please stand for the playing of the National Anthem." A few lingering delinquents, oblivious to the bell and announcements, shout down the corridor. Dotted through the various hallways, teachers stand — eye on their classrooms and adjoining corridors — attempting to arrest those who try to slip in late. Caught between standing still themselves and pursuing the perpetrators, they assume a classic cat-and-mouse stance.

The front hall is different. "Smitty," a guidance counselor, is on guard. The steel jail-like doors cast little daylight in the entry way, fitting for the air of unreality — the divorce between life on the inside and on the outside for a kid like "Tyrone." His chocolate eyes and rounded baby face do little to charm Smitty.

Tyrone knows he's late. The appeal of sleep on a dull day like this, the party until the wee hours, and the empty apart-

hat. *Our right disobedience to a teacher.* ("Teacher, what around the All that guy does is hang around the front hall railing kids.") *Failure to stop for a teacher.* "Failure" is the operative word, isn't it? The V.P. drones on. Of course, Cuthbert is there with her book. Every indiscretion has been recorded, probably in alphabetic order... Long visits to the bathroom. Not doing the work. Skips. Talking in class. Three-day suspension.

The hall has resumed its empty institutional existence. Behind closed doors, students largely sit in rows to begin again the exercise of "Sit down, shut up, and learn." In the technical wing, physical restlessness is tempered by on-task instructions, punctuated by more "Sit down, shut up, and learn."

Basic Assumptions

Teachers nervously assess their crowds each term wondering how to tame the unwieldy bunch before them. Eventually they become blind to the black leather, long dirty hair, poorly nourished bodies, and complexions that grey to match the lockers. They no longer see the impoverished youngsters they "hang in with" daily in the battle to teach and to learn.

Once the students are "controlled" and understand who is "in charge," teachers can begin to teach, right? This is the life of basic education. To teach here by choice is to make a political statement. Students here are the school system's "walking wounded," children who haven't made it. Reasons are diverse, each story exceptional. For them, policies are adapted, taken exception to, and re-worded to patch

body went limp, and when he looked back at me, I saw his face filled with fury. His eyes said it all — “You liar! You never really cared about me!” Drained, he slumped off my lap and walked out, eyes staring straight ahead. He wouldn’t answer or turn around as I called out to him.

I’m telling this story because I’ll never forget Marland and I’ll never forget his face on that last day of school. When I saw his fury, I recognized having seen it before, on the face of his Father. This little boy needed the help of someone more professional than myself to help his family unit. Still, I couldn’t just leave it at that. I’d spoken to Marland’s next year teacher who said she’d closely monitor his progress. Now I approached administration for support. But as administration put it, “You can’t force people into counseling. You can suggest it, you can encourage it, but it’s outside the realm of the school.” I found it painful to accept that fact.

FIVE years later, I came back to that school to teach a grade 6 class. When I discovered that Marland would be one of my students, I was happy, believing I might have been able to understand Marland’s frail home life. I’d never forgotten the heartbroken little boy who lost his Mommy so brutally and then felt betrayed by his grade 1 teacher. I felt I had an advantage over someone who didn’t know his background. As the grade 5 teacher so succinctly put it to me, though, “Tell me how happy you are next month.”

back here until this discussion is over.” He kept on going.

I was livid. When he came to my class the next morning, I informed him that he wouldn’t get back in until he understood that he was to follow instructions I gave him -- no if’s, and’s, or but’s. He said he understood and throughout the year, we played an ever-escalating power game. He did as he was asked but only barely. He answered my every question with, “Say what?”

Time had turned Marland into a more frightening human being. The Father also had suffered the ravages of time and was not to be outdone by his son. At first, Father just took a long time to respond to my positive, carefully-worded communications. Then he wouldn’t respond at all. Marland informed me that his Father said he didn’t have to listen to me and neither did Marland. The situation was becoming impossible. On close examination of his cumulative record, I noted a steady decline in Marland’s academics and attitudes since I had first had him five years before. Results from the previous year’s psychological testing revealed Marland was a low-averaging student who demonstrated a negative attitude toward females.

Like Father, Like Marland?

The behaviour modification card indicated that Father had been “uncooperative.” As a female teacher, I could no longer function without the support of a strong male administrator. Well, male he was -- but strong he was not. In his favour, the principal did force the father to come to the school to meet with the two of us.

limited to signing consent forms for their kids to attend a behavioural program. Period. No provision was made for family counselling, and no recognition was given to the fact that the success of a student in such a program depends on the parents’ co-operation.

Where responsibilities of the school end and those of the home begin is a blurred area. We educators know, however, that education is not the sterile container of the three R’s. Our society is mirrored in schools which are dealing with increasingly complex and troubled behaviour. Little doubt exists that violence in the schools is growing, and that social workers might offer a constructive say in the lives of those kids. Students in behavioural classes carry a number of documented, formative evaluations that verify their poor adjustments. Yet rarely calls for the involvement of parents and often does not speak to the ways in which professionals outside education could help these students.

This tale ends in the home -- where all tales of the schools do.

There’s a knock at the door of the apartment complex and the police bring Marland home to Father. (Clementine moved away when she was 15.) Father quietly tells the officer that he has done his best. He doesn’t know where he went wrong. Marland hangs his head in a regretful posture. He has forgotten how to cry; nothing hurts him anymore. The heartbroken little boy who held his Mommy’s card so tightly now just looks like one mean kid. □

ment have done little to induce him to school this morning. Fumbling for Toronto Transit Commission tickets and the student card the driver liked to hassle him for, Tyrone has made it today, at least to the front hall. But now, forcing open the heavy door, Smitty stands on the other side ready for confrontation. “Take your hat off during the Anthem!” he barks.

Tyrone, almost unaware that the voice was directed to him amongst the sea of late arrivals, sighs and stands still, for the first time since he has managed to rouse his tired body. Is all this hassle worth it?

More of Smitty’s threatening now: “Remove your hat!”

Tyrone refocuses and starts to think. *Oh yeah school, hat, oh thing off. Haven’t looked at my hair since that party last night. Maybe he’ll forget about it. Anyway, the Anthem is over now. Who is this guy anyway?*

But Smitty is now in full stride, ready to administer the surly delinquent. Smitty detects rebellion even before the door is flung open. This is a school, for crying out loud. “Your name?”

Tyrone, still thinking he can give Smitty the slip, engages in conversation with a large, rowdy crowd and begins to move toward the stairwell. But now Smitty has “Cuthbert” with him. What bum luck! Sure, Cuthbert knows him. He’s in her English class -- when he’s gets there.

With a smoothly assured tone, Cuthbert calls him by name and now it’s to the V.P. The litany of sins begins . . . Late. Failure to stop for the Anthem. Failure to remove his

holes.

The perception is not one of student as client. Clients, like Tyrone, say they’re treated differently from their collegiate counterparts. This is the “dummy school.” They maintain they’re treated as babies, not young adults. Controls are tight. They must carry large cumberstone wooden hall passes as a public declaration that they can travel to the bathroom. Any teacher might challenge their presence in the halls, or their behaviour. No student has a “spare.” Students do as they’re told or rather they’re supposed to do as they’re told. So it was a big deal when the issue of wearing hats came under review by the School Expectations Committee.

Until then, school policies had been very definite. No hats. No Walkmans. No jackets. No exceptions. No. No. No. No. And No included visits to vice-principals who confiscate contraband.

The School Expectations Committee, growing out of the notion that teachers and students ought to review school rules in general, was spearheaded by teachers who tired of time-consuming conflicts that had little to do with teaching. The Commit-

Students Review Rules? Yuk

mittee began with a review of rules surrounding student dress codes. Black students had alleged that policies about hats were particularly racist, and the Committee explored whether hat-wearing might be a cultural expression. Some wondered aloud about policies so different from neighbouring collegiates regarding dress codes. Other teachers argued they were just glad to see kids, never mind how they were dressed. Well, that argument did it! The old guard went up in arms. That would be the beginning of the demise, as



"Alec" will tell you, repeatedly. After a heated discussion about hats, "Vince," a middle-aged teacher, stood up and told about his valuable collection of hats. These were worth a great deal of money, particularly to kids who don't have a lot of material benefits, and frankly he thought he had better things to do than to go around collecting hats from kids. "Why not just let them wear them?" he said.

At which point Smitty jumped in and insisted, "They can't dress like that for work. We have responsibility to teach them how to dress for work."

"Barb," a history teacher, got her dig in too: "They can't

dent Activity Council were all run by teachers, this move was clearly unprecedented. That might have been the final straw for Alec, Smitty, and their cronies. What did this Committee chair know about these kids anyway? Could he really be trusted? Kids came and they had plenty to say. It was their God-given right to dress as they pleased and they should be able to, any time, any place. In the ensuing discussion, maybe the student spokespeople learned something. Mostly, though, students were incredulous that anyone was actually listening to them. To think that they might have any impact was beyond their collective comprehension.

For an upcoming staff meeting, Committee members circulated written recommendations. To a staff that doesn't enjoy meetings, only a strike vote could have generated more energy. For the most part, the old-guard faculty had not attended the Committee's open meetings or any policy reviews before. In their minds, policy was the job of administrators, not teachers and certainly not student advisers.

In a carefully counted vote, the staff majority decided that students could wear hats in class only at the discretion of teachers. Certainly, too, hats could be worn in halls. For many teachers, this decision meant no change: life continued as before. For other staff, this policy meant even more referrals to V.P.s for students who blatantly refused to remove their hats in class.

Smitty claimed enrolment would drop next year; surely, senior public schools would not

So what? Two years since implementation, the policy is a non-issue. Seldom if ever do the school's V.P.'s see students on this infraction. Students self-regulate, knowing which control-minded teachers trouble them about wearing their hats and which "let's-get-on-with-teaching" instructors do not. Hats are as colourful in hallways as the rest of dress. For teachers and students who have little experience in schoolhouse democracy, empowerment will be a slow process--like moving from the simplicity of "Sit down, shut up, and learn" to the challenging collegiality of group work. □



LAVERNIE

About limiting young lives

by Bob Ireland-Fenton

I REMEMBER the day I met Laverne—the child/woman to whom I would lose a part of my heart. It was one of those glorious Indian summer days, and I was working in the office of a public high school. The door opened with a velocity such that it bounced off the wall behind with a thud and there she stood.

She looked me squarely in the eyes and announced she was

lunch. The victim had committed the fatal error of "looking the wrong way" toward the boy. So Laverne chucked a tray of food at her and then beat her to a pulp. To make matters worse, Laverne poorly used the teachers who tried to intervene. Via intercom, I was implored to get Laverne back under control.

It was usually the same. I'd arrive; she'd rage. I'd put my arm around her; she'd cry. I'd lead her gently to the office; she'd be unrepentant. I'd be her advocate; she'd be suspended.

Goals To Reach

Laverne was very guarded about her home life. Without her Father, she and her family had emigrated from England and lived in a local public housing project. For a few extras, she had to hold down a part-time job which required the investment of quite a few hours every week. One of these jobs was at an ice-cream machine at Blue Jay games. One evening, since my wife and I were taking in the game, Laverne and I arranged that I'd drop by and see her at work. When Laverne spotted us back in the line, with that same devilish look in her eyes, she promptly bellowed, "Hi, Uncle Fenton." It was just like her to laugh as people glanced at me and at her to figure how we could be that closely related.

Her circumstances didn't maximize her chances for success, but very keenly she wanted



how Laverne had obtained a hard-to-get transfer, although I suspect our former school had been all too glad to sign the papers. Laverne was back in my life.

Faces of the other basketball players with whom I'd been working that afternoon registered shock. Since I was the coach of the team which had put them out the year before, they hadn't yet decided how to receive me. Now that my former "enforcer" arrived, these players were even more wary. However, they too would come to love this kid. A first-ever trip to the championship final, in which Laverne was a major factor, can overcome more than a few difficulties.

Academically and socially, Laverne was coming into her own. Gone now were needless frictions with teachers. Marks were up, and problems were down. Laverne was popular now and our dream of graduating to join the police force was ever closer to becoming reality. Then the wheels fell off.

I remember the event as if it were last week. I was working after school in my classroom and in came Laverne with that look I hadn't seen in a long while—the look which indicated that this time she'd gone too far. "Uncle Fenton, I've got a problem and I've got to talk to you about it."

"How can I help? I asked. "Uncle, I've done something and I'm afraid you won't like me any more."

"Laverne, I can't imagine such a thing. What's so bad?"

She spoke slowly. "I've just got my test, and you're the one I'm telling. I'm pregnant." The next few minutes are

dress the way you do either Smity," referring to the guidance guy's shabby tracksuit. She told him most men she knew wore a shirt and tie to work.

So *that* was the nub of the fight. These are basic-level kids and basic-level kids have to be taught how to dress, right?

Week after week the Committee met, the issue splitting staff along unconventional lines. The original policy had arisen out of safety concerns that kids couldn't wear extra clothing in shops. But the issue for the entrenched old guard was the school's mission: control. At all costs we on staff had to keep control. Kids like Tyrone had to be made "to mind." It wasn't a matter that kids with poor self-images hid behind external clothing or that other neighbourhood schools tolerated hats.

It was a matter of students needing to understand that if they didn't play by the staff's rules, then they shouldn't come to school. A three-day suspension is a dress rehearsal for what comes later. What comes later in Tyrone's real life, on the outside of the school's steel doors, is a lot like what happened to his brother before him... No grade 12 education, not much in the way of job chances, intermittent unemployment insurance, several girlfriends, a variety of children, and maybe an adult re-entry program where officials don't say much about your hat.

In a radical move, the Committee chair made a school-wide announcement, inviting kids to a meeting to voice their opinions. In a school whose newsletter, yearbook, and Stu-

send kids to a hatted "Dumbdale." A number of teachers complained bitterly about the lack of consistency from classroom to classroom; how could this "marshmallow" approach possibly be a policy? For a brief time, the hat figured prominently. If poor rapport had existed before, students now seized chances to spar, to thumb noses at, and to aggravate staff members they liked least.

Which Hat Do You Wear?

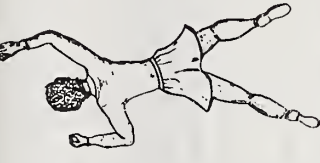
The hat policy is a concrete extension of deeply rooted educational beliefs. It has less to do with headress than it has to do with heart. It hits teachers with basics. It is a concrete manifestation of the old-school notion of respect. It embodies a lament for days gone by when schools reflected norms like "opening doors for ladies."

The argument can be made that our troubled youth need some ownership of their schools if they are not to drop out; they need to see schools as an extension of their minority culture, not as an alien land dictated by aging WASPs. Today when we staff stand on guard, we had better address new-world precepts, equipping our students with strategies to deal with pressures of *their* society. At the same time, kids need to understand policy, where it comes from, and how it becomes. That's what makes this a redeeming story. If the old guard had lost, then at least students — or those who spoke and were heard — learned something about standing up and talking instead of simply sitting down and listening.

"the baddest kid in the whole school." Out of the corner of one eye, I saw the office staff nodding agreement. Always the "smart" mouth, Ireplied, "I never met a bad girl I didn't like." I could see the light of the devil flicker in her eye, and we never looked back. The conversation ended with the discovery that we both loved basketball. I was to be the senior girls' basketball coach.

I also was to grow to love Laverne in the way many educators feel about students special to them. I remember, back as a student at the Faculty of Education, my snorting cynicism toward a certain passage in a horrible hot-pink psychology text: it described relationships suggesting that in many cases teachers and students might actually evolve to love one another. Laverne was to firmly undo my skepticism of this point. To say that opposites attract is to understand our makeups: she the loudmouth; I the easily embarrassed. She the behavioural problem; I the disciplinarian. She the tough kid; I the teacher. She the needy; I the one who presumably had made it. We also belonged to different cultural/racial groups.

During our friendship, often I was called on to salvage situations inflamed by Laverne's temper. One concerned a girl who Laverne guessed had designs on a boy she liked. Every day Laverne would come and visit before school, knowing I'd be there. I could see she was slowly working herself into a frenzy and, in spite of whatever I could say, the volcano that was her wrath exploded one day at



to become a policewoman. A basic-level student who'd taken all the basic credits that were available at our school, she faced an uphill battle whenever she'd have to take a general-level course. Becoming her tutor that year, I — who barely can get my income tax right — somehow learned the newest math. To reach her goal, we had to finish grade 12. We were determined to do it.

Laverne's claim to fame was basketball. She wasn't blessed with abundant skills but played with heart and toughness. Although never a starter, she would enter the game when the opposition was playing contact under the basket or talking liberties with our shooters. I never told Laverne to be aggressive. Her style was fierce, and that season we won a championship.

After two years, I was promoted to another school. When I reluctantly bade farewell to Laverne, she told me not to worry about it. "I'll take care of it, Uncle Fenton."

It was one of those glorious Indian summer afternoons of another fall, and this time I was working in the gym. The door opened with a velocity such that it bounced off the wall with a thud and there she stood. Some-

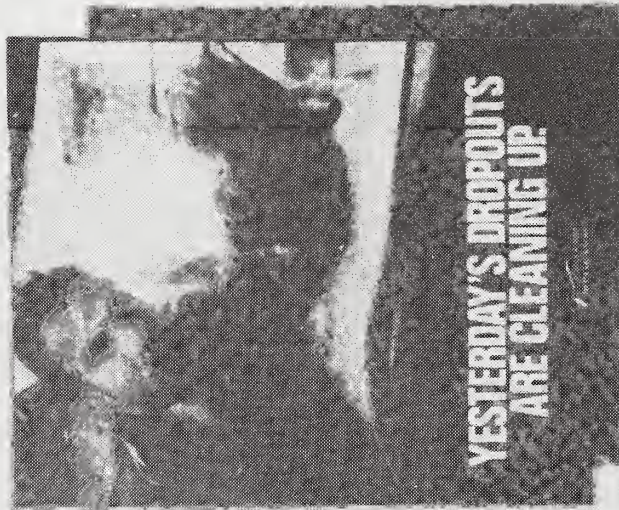
hazy in my mind but I remember inquiring about the father and asking what she wanted to do. She didn't know, and I was shocked to hear myself very pragmatically suggesting abortion, an issue I have never resolved for myself. I realized that neither of us were thinking clearly. In search of objectivity, I advised that we go down to student services and see a particular female counsellor whom I thought could be very helpful. I got Laverne in immediately and returned to my room, hoping we could make this right.

In less than 20 minutes, Laverne was back, and her normally high spirits had just about returned. It was all planned. She would apply for student welfare, get her own place, keep the baby, and return to school. Still the very pragmatic type, I didn't like this terribly quick resolution one bit. Didn't that counsellor know Laverne was at risk just leading her own life? With her low maturity and socio-economic level, how could she run a household, raise a child, and still graduate? I asked Laverne if she'd re-think this and considering putting the child up for adoption. She wouldn't hear of it. She had a "workable" plan, thank you very much.

Later, I approached the counsellor privately to review the situation. This would be an all-important decision that would be hard to reverse. Hadn't Laverne and the counsellor fully considered alternatives? The counsellor replied that choices such as abortion or adoption would never be considered or even brought up by the school. Both could lead to legal problems for

Ads Urge Kids to Stay in School

The ads reproduced in reduced size on this page are among the 12 chosen as winners of the "Yearn to Learn Challenge," a competition co-sponsored by the magazines **Advertising Age** and **Scholastic Inc.** The 1,045 entries from creative artists and agencies were designed to entice students to stay in school.



If high school
is such a joke, why
isn't this dropout
laughing?



Without A
High School Diploma,
Air Jordan Would
Never Have Gotten Off
The Ground.



has just announced, I reflect upon the guidance department's attitude to secondary placement. I know several high school teachers who think the guidance department is too lenient in its recommendations on secondary placement. It's common to hear secondary teachers griping about the number of general students in their advanced-level classes. So Bonnie questions Liza's intention to have Michael placed in an advanced level. She says that if the problem is a motivational one, Michael could be put on a daily reporting form to monitor his homework.

Bonnie assures Liza that the school would initiate the form but that it would be the family's responsibility to monitor it at home. The panel kicks this idea around for a while, and reluctantly the Higginses accept it. Liza says she'll given the contract a try. But then she leans over, pounds the table, and delivers her trump card, "I want Michael assessed by the I.P.R.C. (the Identification Placement Review Committee). Tell them they're dealing with a woman who knows the system."

By the silence, I can tell that idea bombs. Bonnie clears her throat and calmly explains that in this case she doesn't believe psychological testing is appropriate. Bonnie, other teachers, and I all give reasons why testing isn't necessary in this case. We say the same thing in different ways: we blame Michael's poor achievement on his lack of effort as well as latent abilities.

But the Higginses don't give an inch. Bonnie finally gives in and says that we'll put forth Michael's name for testing. The

teachers, whether they had scheduled an appointment or not. I ask, "Why does she want another interview now?"

Kneading the Clay

On entering the conference room Monday at 8 a.m., I see that the Higginses are already there. I ask if they want a cup of coffee, but neither does. I have one to warm myself; the atmosphere in here is definitely on the chilly

& Mrs. Jones. I wonder if the other new teachers are having as much fun as I am? Who's next? Oh oh: Mr. & Mrs. Higgins.

I spy them on the other side of the library, already making their way toward me, their son Michael in tow. Well, Michael's report was much worse than Janet Jones's. He certainly will never get into M.I.T. with the report card he took home. I'm sure that phone calls I'd had with the

point of view. If Laverne was initially guilty of a lapse of judgment, school policy at that point also took advantage of her. The counsellor's failure to ask Laverne to meet again and to gradually consider other options did not enable Laverne to ponder, over time, a matter which would affect her whole vibrant life.

In Laverne's case, the policy — based on the school's

the system if a client/student were to change her mind. It was school policy, the counsellor said, to help arrange the welfare option.

Ultimately, that counsellor even organized a shower for Laverne's baby. Although I attended it, I worried about what message my involvement would send to other students. Some faculty could see nothing wrong with celebrating the event and pointed to the need, clear and

definite, to support Laverne both financially and spiritually. Speaking for several other staff members, one teacher said, "Do you mean to tell me that after paying my taxes so that Laverne can get a nice little apartment and a pay cheque each month that I'm expected to bless the whole process by showing up to a baby shower? Noway. Laverne should put the kid up for adoption." Finally, a young divorced male teacher said that Laverne had created her own misfortune; having made her bed, now Laverne had to lie in it (she must keep the baby).

The inevitable happened. Laverne got her cheques, her apartment, her baby. The end came quickly. She was unable to cope with her personal situation and school too. The day she dropped out was the saddest of my teaching career.

Long-term Pain?

Enough time has passed to allow me to try to examine, with less emotional involvement than in the past, what went wrong to end Laverne's school career. When she was advised by the counsellor, she was seduced by the immediate benefits of a short-sighted plan. With judgment clouded by maternal feelings, Laverne was presented with an option that seemed to meet all her pressing needs. Certainly she would accept that "workable" plan. On the one hand, Laverne was offered all she thought she wanted -- the alternatives were just too painful to consider. The instant advice of the guidance counsellor made the problem go away -- at least from the school's

avoiding potential litigation — is workable in the short-term but insensitive in the long. It is a shoot-from-the-hip policy for which Laverne paid a heavy price. Her career plans are forfeited, and gone are her — and possibly her child's — chances to break out of the social assistance cycle. As I see it, the system failed Laverne. When she was hard to handle, school policy initially sent her away via suspension. Then, when she needed help the most, policy effectively hastily sent her way again — this time for good. How many other Lavernes have there been?

The last time I saw her was at the wedding, four years later, of one of her teammates on the basketball squad. At the time, Laverne was awaiting the imminent arrival of her second child. I sat with her daughter bouncing on my knee and, as I looked at this pretty baby girl, I felt ashamed for once having suggested my own version of a pragmatic policy. □



PYGMALION CHAINED

On breaking the mold

by PAUL SHARF

"PARENT interview night and I'm finished with the agitated Mr.

Higginses, convinces me this isn't going to be an easy interview. I put on my warmest smile and prepare for the inquisition.

I'm relieved by the positive tone immediately set by the Higginses. Mrs. Higgins ("Oh, call me Liza") and Mr. Higgins ("No, just Henry, *please*") are gracious. I'm impressed by their folksy tone, seemingly out of sync with their professional air and articulate speech. What really gets to me is their patient encouraging treatment of Michael. Together, we discuss their son's progress and his demonstrated ability in the subjects I teach him. We review a plan which should see some boost in Michael's achievement. This being the last interview of the evening, feeling somewhat relaxed and thankful, I begin to make small talk. I learn Liza is a teacher in a local school.

A week after the interviews, I'm told our guidance head, Bonnie, wants to see me. I'm still trying to make a good impression around here and with the taste of some last-week interviews still in my mouth, I'm a little nervous when I enter Bonnie's office.

"Hi, Paul," she smiles.

"Good." She doesn't seem upset at all. "What's up?"

"Mrs. Higgins called. She's furious about Michael's report card. She wants a conference with all his teachers."

"Huh? I mean, what?" I respond. "What on earth for?" I tell her about the positive interview I had with "Oh, call me Liza" and "No, just Henry, *please*." I add that the Higginses had interviewed all of Michael's

side. The Higginses don't appear to be here for a picnic; they mean business. Well, here's the week is off to a great start.

Michael's teachers complete their assessments of his progress. They tell the Higginses exactly what they told them at the interviews last week. I do the same. Drawing in a slow audible breath, Liza places both elbows on the table. Clenching her fists, she surveys the room, clears her throat, and says, "Our dear son is showing no visibility of commitment to his school work. He's discovered girls." Liza goes on to explain how frustrated she and Henry are. "I don't know what to do at this point...maybe light a bomb under him?" Liza rolls her eyes, throwing her arms in the air and looks appealingly at the ceiling as if asking the gods for an answer. Then she folds her arms across her chest, slouches deeply into her chair, surveys the panel, and awaits a reply.

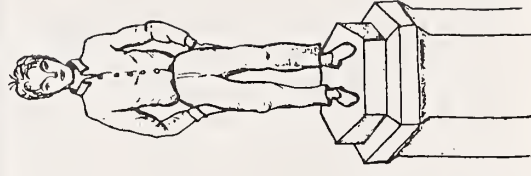
Bonnie says a bomb might not be the answer. She points to a history of low achievement as indicated by their son's records. She makes note of Michael's poor performance on all standardized tests since testing began in grade 4. At this point, I squirm a little; I'm no fan of standardized tests.

Liza counters by arguing against the validity of such tests, qualifying her critique by making reference to her experience as a special ed. teacher. Leaning forward, Liza articulates her words by tapping the desk with her index finger. "We're not closing any doors. Next year in grade 9, Michael is taking *all* courses at the advanced level."

Thinking about what Liza

homework form is discussed briefly again, just to cool everyone down. The meeting ends, and Bonnie takes my elbow and guides me back into the conference room. She frowns and says, "I've seen this maddening business so often. If we go through with this, we'll have to bump some legitimate case...some kid who really needs to be tested."

During class, I call Michael to my desk. He approaches tentatively, headed bowed. I can't help feeling sorry for the kid. We chat briefly, and I try to be as supportive as I can. I tell him I'd met with his parents and that's it's been decided he'll be put on a homework form. Michael draws in a long controlled breath. Clenching his jaw, he turns red in the face and the veins of his neck become quite pronounced. Almost inaudibly, he says, "My Dad will kill me." He returns to his seat to stare at the wall til the bell rings. Later I learn that he's been denied access to skiing, which is a genuine shame -- in my class, that's all he writes about



in his journals.

That week, as if I had no other needy students to attend to, I find out I'm to have the pleasure of still another interview with Liza. She informs me Henry phoned the I.P.R.C. the same day as the progress conference. Liza tells me they'll pressure the I.P.R.C. until the case is heard. "We've requested that a specific psychiatrist do the testing."

I don't know how to respond, but it doesn't matter. Liza keeps on going. She tells me how hard Michael worked on the wind tunnel he'd constructed for the school's Science Fair, how he'd laboured so long and alone in the basement. She says even his Father couldn't have done as well. She tells me how upset she is he wasn't a finalist. I think to myself that the judges hadn't considered it because Michael didn't know which end of the tunnel was which. This apparently isn't a valid reason in Liza's estimation. Turning to me, she says in a voice oozing confidence, "You know, maybe I should just let him fail to wake him up. He's just like his Father: Henry failed grade 10 and now he's an aeronautical engineer."

The second week after the conference, Michael doesn't bring his homework form for three days in a row. Each day he tells me it's been signed but that he's forgotten it. Searching his locker with him, I find the crumpled sheets on the floor, unsigned. Embarrassed, Michael admits lying to me. I tell him that to clear up the matter, I have to phone his parents. Michael nods and slinks away. A couple weeks later, I hear that he's telling other

We're not closing any doors

teachers the same lie about forgetting his homework form.

The Clay Crumbles

The next academic year rolls around and Michael is in grade 9 taking all courses at the advanced level. I see Bonnie in the hall, telling her I was aware she had an interview with the Higginses earlier to discuss results of the psych. test.

"Just as we suspected, Paul, and as we tried to convince the Higginses, Michael tested on the low end of average."

"Have you heard from them lately, Bonnie?"

"Not a lot. Mrs. Higgins called the other day to tell me we messed up on his timetable. She says we didn't balance it well enough: it's too heavy for him. You know, Paul, it's understandable for parents to want the best for their child, but you'd think they'd know when enough is enough. It's bad enough they forced the psych. assessment. But what really boggles my mind is that they can't or won't accept the results."

Liza and Henry are vying to create a child able to live up to their expectations. I've seen this scenario often enough to believe if it's not the Higginses, it will be someone else. I'm reminded of how Pygmalion tried the same

trick when he sculpted his conception of the perfect woman. The only difference is that Aphrodite granted his request and his perfect woman did come to life. Unfortunately our conception of a bright child with overcomeable learning disabilities was rejected by the I.P.R.C. When they are both bright professionals, the parents still have trouble accepting that their son is low average.

Despite results of the psych. test, the Higginses placed Michael at the advanced level, considering they'd destreamed him. But real destreaming did not occur. Michael is drowning in a system where curriculum and delivery are determined solely by students' advanced academic abilities. In Michael's case, this is a deficit-driven model grinding what's left of his self-concept into the dirt. Sadly, Michael is doing much worse now than last year. Whenever they think about their son's results, the Higginses blow a couple of valves, take it out on Michael, and blame us.

The Higginses were quiet, reasonable parents until Michael reached grade 8. Around course-selection time, they really began to put the screws to their son, his teachers, and the school. Possibly the system described in the *Transition Years*, which proposes to delay course/"career" selections, would give Michael and students like him the time necessary to let their hormones settle and to understand fully the implications of academic choice. It's happened before: as students mature, some unexpectedly do become achievers. After grade

10, Michael probably would never become one of these achievers, but he would be given the time to accept the clay from which he was made. And maybe, at the very least, he'd keep unrealistic parents off his back — we'd be able to chain our Pygmals — if only for two years.

Reaching my classroom, I glance out the window and see it's snowing. The weather reminds me how much Michael loves skiing. Maybe if the *Transition Years* were in place now, he'd be skiing this weekend. Yes, that's the way it should be. Michael would be enjoying himself, the Higginses wouldn't suffer a coronary whenever the words "high school" are mentioned, and I would have a full head of hair.

PRECEDING ISSUE



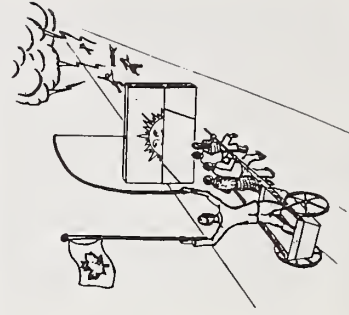
THE February issue, Reserve Funding, served a dual purpose. It highlighted Native education in Canada, a topical issue that demands increased awareness, and it addressed the process of teacher induction, albeit in the Native arena.

The first and third tales described problems of new teachers: the anguish of not knowing how to cope with student behaviour, the uncertainty

of "the ropes," and the general feeling of being a stranger in unknown Native territory. The sketches also offered some hope that, with time, many of these obstacles might diminish, and the new teacher could become a seasoned professional more in tune with the surrounding school culture. The tales also showed examples of situations in which this adjustment is not so feasible.

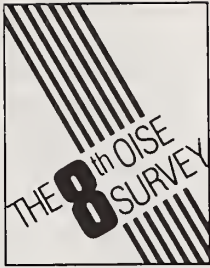
The middle tale detailed the induction of a program involving a new Native teacher and subsequent problems and misunderstandings. Not dissimilar to the induction of a teacher, this process also showed the way from comparative ignorance to a state of knowing. Whether this knowing is actually enlightenment was seen to hinge on personalities, structures, and processes.

NEXT ISSUE



TOWARD BILINGUALISM

TALES FROM THE SCHOOLS, vol. 3, n. 2 was edited by Richard Townsend, Elizabeth Campbell as associate editor, Harriet Goldborough & Leo Santos on production, and Barbara M. Townsend, art. *Mail: Tales*, Department of Educational Administration, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6.



Educational and Career Choices

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION FOR STUDENT DECISION-MAKING



The 1990 OISE Survey repeated a set of questions first asked in 1988, regarding how well high school students were prepared for major decisions about their education. Respondents were, in addition, asked at what grade level most students were ready to make decisions about going to college or university or entering the labour force. In 1990, a set of questions on career choices was also included in the survey.

Preparation for Making Educational Decisions

Public assessments of how well the high schools prepare students for major decisions about their education are essentially unchanged since 1988 (see Table 20). Half of respondents think students were poorly prepared to decide whether or not to drop out before graduation. This is broadly consistent with a 1988 Decima poll finding that

less than half of respondents nationally thought schools did an "excellent" or "good" job of encouraging youth to stay in school (Gregg & Posner, 1990, p. 67). Opinion is evenly split on whether students are well or poorly prepared to decide about continuing their education after high school graduation or entering the labour force. Only in the case of the decision about whether to go to community college or university do a majority think that students are well prepared.

Table 21 "At what grade are most students ready to make decisions about going to college or university or entering the labour force after high school graduation?"

	%
Grade 12	41
Grade 11	26
Grade 10	15
Grade 9	7
Grade 8 or earlier	4
Don't know/Not stated	7
N	1,032

As shown in Table 21, two-thirds of respondents think that most students are ready to make decisions about going to college or university or entering the labour force after high school graduation by Grades 11 or 12; a plurality (41 percent) select the later grade. The later the grade at which respondents think most students are ready to make decisions, the less likely they are to favour early streaming of high school students. Those 55 and older are somewhat more likely to think that most students are ready before Grade 11 to make decisions about continuing their education after graduation; however, even among these older respondents, only a third hold this view.

Preparation and Resources for Making Career Decisions

As Table 20 indicates, only a little more than a third of respondents to the 1990 survey think that high schools prepare students well to make career choices; over half

Table 20 "How well do you think high school prepares students to choose . . . ?"

	Well %	Poorly %	Don't know/ Not stated %	N
Between dropping out of school or staying until graduation?				
1988	40	50	11	1,011
1990	42	51	7	1,032
Between continuing their formal education or joining the workplace after high school graduation?				
1988	43	46	11	1,011
1990	47	48	6	1,032
Between university and community college?				
1988	50	36	14	1,011
1990	53	40	8	1,032
What career to choose?				
1990	37	56	7	1,032

think students are poorly prepared. Those in the lowest income category are least likely to think students are poorly prepared; those in the highest income category are the most likely to hold this view. A similar, though weaker, relationship appears for education, with the university educated being most critical of students' preparedness. Corporate executives are somewhat less likely to think students are well prepared for career choices, but also less likely to offer an opinion than most other occupational groups. School guidance counsellors and employment counsellors outside the school are most frequently identified by respondents as the best sources of advice to students regarding career decisions, followed by adult family members or friends (see Table 22). Each of these options is the first or second choice of at least half of respondents. Classroom teachers are a distant fourth most selected option.

Table 22 "Which one of the following do you think is best placed to give advice to high school students about career decisions? Which is the second best placed?"

	Best placed %	2nd best placed %
School guidance counsellors	35	25
Employment counsellors outside the school	30	22
Adult family members, relatives and friends	21	31
Classroom teachers	12	18
Don't know/Not stated	2	4
N	1,032	1,032

direct sources of information more than twice as frequently as indirect sources (i.e., guidance offices and employment counsellors). Students' part-time or summer work experience is much less frequently selected, probably on grounds that the kinds of jobs

Table 23 "If high school students wanted to find out about particular occupations, which one of the following do you think would be the most useful source of information? Which would be the second most useful?"

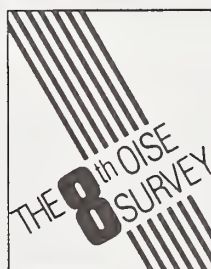
	Most useful %	2nd most useful %
People working in particular occupations	30	25
Students' own experience in school-sponsored programs like cooperative education	30	25
School guidance office	14	12
Employment counsellors outside the school	12	14
Students' own experience in part-time or summer jobs	12	21
Don't know/Not stated	1	3
N	1,032	1,032

and work settings that can be observed or tried in this way are more limited than is the case for school-sponsored programs.

As shown in Table 24, co-operative education programs are highly regarded as a resource for student decision-making about careers. Almost 60 percent think that such programs would be "a great deal" of help to students deciding what jobs they want to pursue.

Table 24 "Cooperative education allows high school students to obtain direct job experience while earning course credits. How much help do you think this would be to students in deciding what jobs they want to do?"

	%
A great deal	59
A fair amount	32
Not very much/Not at all	8
Don't know/Not stated	2
N	1,032



Postsecondary Access

Demand for postsecondary education has grown faster than government funding throughout the past decade, provoking not only calls for increased funding but proposals to restrict enrolment. We have tracked public support for one such proposal, to base student entry levels on the availability of jobs for graduates, over the past decade. As Table 25 illustrates, there has been continued majority opposition to this proposition, increasing in the mid-1980s. While there is at least strong plurality opposition

in all social groups to postsecondary quotas, the more highly educated are also more strongly opposed to such a restricting policy.

One of the major specific policy recommendations of the recent task force on the future of the Ontario college system (Ontario Council of Regents, 1990) is to expand and improve opportunities for students to move between the college and university sectors. Public support for this proposal is assessed here in terms of the

transfer of credits from colleges to universities. As Table 26 shows, public support for such expanded opportunities is very strong with about three-quarters agreeing and less than 10 percent definitely opposed. This strong consensus prevails across all social groups.

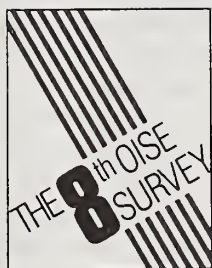


Table 25 "The number of students admitted to university and community college programs should be based primarily on the availability of jobs for graduates, even if this keeps out qualified students who want these programs."

	Agree %	Disagree %	Neither/ Not stated %	N
All respondents				
1979	37	53	10	1,084
1982	37	52	11	1,050
1986	25	61	14	1,042
1988	19	64	18	1,011
1990	25	64	12	1,032
Education				
Elementary	29	49	22	99
High school incomplete	33	55	12	168
High school complete	26	60	14	252
Non-university postsecondary	23	67	10	225
University	18	75	7	285

Table 26 "Opportunities for students to transfer credits from Ontario community colleges to universities should be increased."

	Agree %	Disagree %	Neither/ Don't know %	N
All respondents	74	9	17	1,032



Education and the Workplace

The adaptation of education to changing workplace needs has been a central preoccupation of public policy debates over the past decade. In the 1986 OISE Survey, Ontarians' perceptions and preferences on a wide range of relevant issues were probed (Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1987, pp. 10-19). In the current survey, we have tracked the public's assessments of current employment qualifications in both general and

personal terms as well as their preferences on two aspects of re-training policy: appropriate institutional locations and funding sources.

Three times over the past decade, respondents have been asked for their general assessments of changes in the skill requirements of the workplace compared to a generation before. As Table 27 shows, in all surveys the majority have expressed a

belief that job skill requirements have increased. The popularity of this perception may have grown between 1980 and 1986.

In any case, nearly three-quarters of Ontarians now, as in 1986, think that the skill requirements of work have generally increased, while only 15 percent perceive a general decrease and only a tiny minority see no change. The pervasiveness of the belief in the upgrading of work requirements in general is further indicated by the absence of significant social background differences. Most notably, similar majorities at all educational levels and in all occupational classes share this general view in spite of substantial differences in their perceptions of changes in the educational requirements for their own jobs (Livingstone, Hart, & Davie, 1987).

The Ontario public continues to be much more divided in their assessments of the

Table 27 "Compared to 20 years ago, do you think more or less skill is involved in the work done by most of the labour force?"

	Increased %	Stayed the same %	Decreased %	Don't know/ Not stated %	N
All respondents 1980 ¹	58	15	21	6	1,108
All respondents 1986	73	6	16	5	1,042
All respondents 1990	72	8	15	5	1,032
Employed respondents 1990	74	7	15	4	626

¹ The wording of the 1980 question was somewhat different: "Compared to twenty years ago, do you think the work most of the Canadian labour force does now involves more or less skill and independent judgement?"

Table 28 "With the level of formal education you have, you are entitled to a better job than you have been able to get."

	Agree %	Disagree %	Neither/ Don't know %	N
All respondents 1986	33	37	30	1,042
All respondents 1988	32	43	25	1,011
All respondents 1990	37	42	21	1,032
Employed respondents 1986	30	45	25	609
Employed respondents 1988	33	47	20	606
Employed respondents 1990	37	45	19	626
Age				
18 - 24	64	15	21	149
25 - 34	38	47	16	256
35 - 44	33	47	21	203
45 - 54	34	46	20	128
55 - 64	30	45	25	140
65 +	26	46	28	145
Ethnicity				
British	32	46	22	580
French	48	36	17	60
Other European	37	43	20	250
Non-European	56	21	23	132
Occupational class				
Corporate executives	6	73	20	109
Small employers	23	70	7	38
Self-employed	36	47	17	69
Managers	31	50	20	92
Professional employees	36	49	15	89
Supervisors	37	36	27	105
Service workers	40	38	22	113
Industrial workers	49	40	12	93
Homemakers	34	38	28	153
Unemployed	46	30	24	30
Retired	25	46	29	125
Students	66	15	19	75

relations between their own formal education and the jobs they have been able to get. This is true in terms of substantial mismatches between self-reported qualifications and job requirements, the so-called issues of "underemployment" and "undereducation" (see Livingstone, 1987). It is also true in terms of people's sense of educational entitlement to a better job, as Table 28 shows.

Both respondents in general and employed respondents in particular in each of the past three surveys have expressed deep divisions and substantial uncertainty as to whether they feel that their education entitles them to a better job. While the public as a whole has continued to be marginally more likely to express acceptance rather than a sense of disenfranchisement, there are major differences between social groups.

Those under 25 years of age are much more likely to feel that they deserve better jobs. Those of non-European and French ethnicities are more likely than those of British ancestry to feel educationally disenfranchised. Among occupational classes, corporate executives and small employers strongly reject any sense of educational disenfranchisement, in contrast with the more divided views of most employee groups, and the predictable prevalence of a sense of disenfranchisement among students.

The retraining of the existing workforce to respond to the challenges of global competition and technological change have become increasingly dominant public policy themes in all advanced capitalist societies over the past decade, and especially so over the past few years in Canada (see Advisory Council on Adjustment, 1989; Ontario Council of Regents, 1990; Ontario Premier's Council, 1990). Fundamental issues here include, first, which of a wide array of alternative institutional settings should be given priority for such retraining programs and, second, who should pay most of the required costs.

Table 29 summarizes current public views of the most practical institutional locale for upgrading programs. A plurality of about 40 percent choose community colleges for such training, while about a quarter opt for courses offered in workplaces. No other venue receives as much as 10 percent support. When respon-

dents are offered a second choice, the same pattern is repeated, with colleges and workplaces being either the first or second choice of the majority of Ontarians. These preference patterns occur in nearly all social groups. The only notable, if predictable, exception is that the unemployed are much more likely than most other occupa-

tional groups to favour colleges over workplaces, as the best sites for retraining programs.

The most controversial issue in recent debates about the development of retraining programs has been designating who should pay for them (e.g., Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre Task Force, 1990). While funding proposals to date have varied considerably, most have emphasized either employers, current workers, or government as the primary source of funding. Table 30 summarizes the Ontario public's current preferences in these terms. A small majority think employers should pay most of the costs of retraining programs. About one-fifth feel that government should be the major contributor, while only 5 percent think current workers should pay most costs themselves. It should also be noted that almost a quarter of respondents

volunteer various combinations of employer, worker, and government sources, reflecting a substantial popular sentiment favouring the co-operative funding of retraining programs.

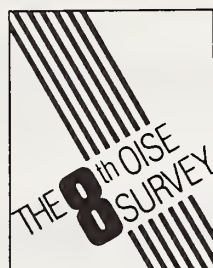
At least strong pluralities in all employee groups favour employers bearing most of the retraining costs, and the unemployed are nearly unanimously in favour of this option. It should be recognized that less than a third of small employers are prepared to pay most retraining costs. However, our finding that most corporate executives are prepared to do so supports the results of a recent national survey which found that majorities of *both* corporate business leaders and labour leaders feel that business, but not labour unions, should provide funding for retraining programs (Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, 1990).

Table 29 "Many people who leave school early find that their job opportunities are limited by their education. Which of the following do you think would be the most practical way for most people to upgrade their skills and knowledge?"

	%	N
Community college courses	39	402
Courses offered in workplaces	25	260
High school courses	11	116
Private technical or business school courses	8	83
Courses offered by community organizations or agencies	8	79
Home study courses offered by correspondence or educational TV	7	70
Don't know	2	23

Table 30 "If re-training programs are needed for the current workforce in an industry, who should pay for most of the costs?"

	%	N
Employers	51	525
Current Workers	5	56
The government	19	199
Combinations (volunteered)	23	239
Don't know	1	13
Employers		
%		
Occupational class		
Corporate executives	58	109
Small employers	29	38
Self-employed	47	69
Managers	56	92
Professional employees	58	89
Supervisors	55	105
Service workers	57	113
Industrial workers	45	93
Homemakers	49	153
Unemployed	77	30
Retired	51	125
Students	37	75



Employment Equity

The 1990 OISE Survey included two agree/disagree questions on employment equity, both asked in prior surveys. The first deals with comparative employment outcomes in terms of salary for male and female university and community college graduates. The second question is about affirmative action in the appointment of elementary school principals.

As shown in Table 31, almost half of respondents disagree that women now graduating from postsecondary institutions obtain jobs with salaries as high as those of male graduates. This is a somewhat smaller proportion than found in 1988 when 55 percent held this view. In fact, available data strongly suggest that current women graduates do not get jobs paying as well as

those obtained by men. Overall, women with postsecondary credentials in full time jobs earn substantially less than men (see Labour Canada, 1987, pp. 36, 52; Statistics Canada, 1987, pp. 70, 71). The most recent Statistics Canada survey of postsecondary graduates finds women earning less than males two years after graduation (Clark et al., 1986, pp. 54, 55).

Women are somewhat more likely than men (52 versus 44 percent) to disagree that pay equity has been achieved by recent graduates. A majority of the university educated (58 percent) hold this view compared to slightly over 40 percent of those with less than a high school diploma. Those in the 18-24 age group are marginally more likely to agree that pay equity has been

achieved, a pattern found in 1988 as well. There are no significant differences related to whether respondents are in the labour force or not. However, corporate executives are somewhat less likely than most other occupational groups (except students) to disagree that male and female graduates obtain jobs with similar salaries, but they are also less likely to offer an opinion.

Our second question on employment equity asked about policy preferences rather than perceptions of the current situation. Respondents were, in fact, given the information that "... most elementary school teachers are women, while most principals are men. ..." (A recent CEA report documents the continued severe underrepresentation of women in principalships and other supervisory officer positions — see Rees, 1990.) They were then asked whether they supported filling at least half of new appointments to principalships with women.

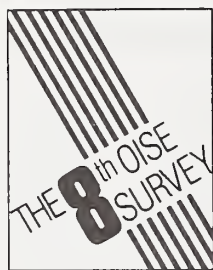
In 1984, a majority (55 percent) supported affirmative action in appointing elementary school principals; in 1990, 49 percent take this position (see Table 31). In both years, about a quarter of respondents do not offer an opinion. Women are more

likely than men (55 versus 43 percent) to support affirmative action; there are, otherwise, few differences in opinion by social group. Corporate executives are much more likely than other occupational groups to disagree with affirmative action: over half take this position.

The above results are consistent with those of a January 1990 *Toronto Star*/CTV poll which found 54 percent in support of laws imposing affirmative action (Doyle, 1990). (However, another recent poll found a majority opposed to quotas for private firms — see Coiro, 1989.)

Table 31 Gender Issues: Education and Employment Equity

	Agree %	Disagree %	Neither/ Not stated %	N
Most women now graduating from university or community college get jobs with salaries that are as high as those of male graduates.				
1988	31	55	14	1,011
1990	36	48	16	1,032
Since most elementary school teachers are women, while most principals are men, at least half of future appointments of elementary school principals should go to women.				
1984	55	21	25	1,046
1990	49	28	23	1,032



Politics of Education

The 1990 survey included two questions dealing with the politics of education. We repeated a question used in the 1979 and 1984 CEA polls of opinion on education (see Flower, 1984). Respondents were asked whether the general public has too much, too little, or enough say in "how the schools are run." The 1990 survey also repeated a question from prior OISE surveys asking respondents whether they agree or disagree

that Ontario teachers should (as they do) have the legal right to strike.

Since 1979, the proportion of Ontario respondents who think the public has too little say in how the schools are run has increased from just less than half to 60 percent (see Table 32). Only a tiny minority — constant since 1979 — thinks public influence is excessive. There are, however, few differences by social group. The uni-

versity educated, however, are distinctly less likely than other groups to think the general public has too little say — 48 percent versus over 60 percent for all other educational groups. While there is clearly strong and apparently growing support for greater public influence on how schools are run, the results of a recent U.S. Gallup poll suggest that the public may make distinctions about participation in different areas of school policy (see Elam, 1990, p.45).

Every OISE survey of educational issues since 1980 has asked whether Ontario teachers should have the legal right to strike. The distribution of opinion has been largely stable over the decade. About a third agree with the right to strike (which teachers currently enjoy), somewhat less than 60 percent disagree, and about one in ten do not state an opinion (see Table 33). The stability of opinion through years of high and

Table 32 "How do you feel about the amount of say the general public has in how the schools are run?"

	Too much say %	Enough say %	Too little say %	Don't know? Not stated %	N
1979 ¹	6	41	49	5	758
1984 ¹	6	32	53	10	753
1990	6	29	60	5	1,032

¹ From 1979 and 1984 CEA polls of Canadian opinion on education. See CEA (1979) and Flower (1984).

low levels of actual strike activity suggests that views are based on enduring values or ideologies little effected by recent events.

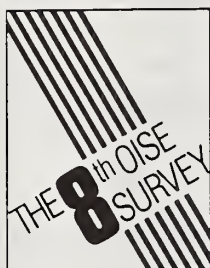
Seventy percent of those over 65 disagree with the right to strike, compared to about half of those under 35. Those with university degrees are relatively evenly

divided on the issue: 42 percent agree with the right to strike, 50 percent disagree. In contrast, among those with elementary level schooling only, two-thirds disagree; less than a quarter support the right to strike. Almost 80 percent of corporate executives oppose the right to strike for teachers,

compared to slightly less than half of industrial workers. While majorities of most other occupational groups also oppose the right to strike, majorities are typically smaller than for corporate executives. Support for the right to strike is highest in Metro Toronto, lowest in western and northern Ontario.

Table 33 "Teachers in Ontario should have the legal right to strike."

	Agree %	Disagree %	Neither/ Not stated %	N
1980	35	56	9	1,108
1982	29	63	9	1,050
1984	30	55	15	1,046
1986	34	54	12	1,042
1988	33	58	9	1,011
1990	33	58	9	1,032



Adult and Continuing Education

Participation in Adult Education

Adult education continues to make up a large sector of education in our province. We have surveyed patterns of participation since 1984 as well as asking a number of other questions related to adult education. As Table 34 shows, 31 percent of the adults report taking a course in the past year. This result is a significant increase from the 24 percent reported in 1988 and more than half again as large as the 20 percent reported in 1986. Participation is increasing rapidly, and current levels far exceed those reported in the last national survey (Devereaux, 1984).

While there are no other current surveys with comparable participation data, a recent Gallup question on adults' intention to participate in adult education courses showed a rise from 19 percent in 1985 to 24

percent in 1990 (Gallup Canada, 1990). Although these data are national figures, the Gallup data provide another indication of the rapid increase in adult education.

Table 34 also reports the kinds of courses taken. The leading types of courses, as in the past, are general interest, community college and university courses, and job retraining. The other categories remain relatively small. The recent increase in general interest courses is the highest, but there are increases in every course category, indicating that the increased participation is widespread.

Table 35 shows that participation is highly correlated with age, education, and occupational class. Participation rates have increased for every age category. Particularly large gains are noted in the 25-34 and 45-54 age categories. The highest partici-

pation rates are in the two youngest categories with over 40 percent indicating that they took an adult education course last year. In terms of education levels, there is a strong correlation between greater prior education and greater continuing adult participation.

For the university category, over 40 percent of respondents report participating in a course in the past year. The results for occupational class display both continuity and change. Professional employees and students continue to have the highest participation rates with 52 percent of the professional employees and 51 percent of the students indicating that they had taken a course. However, service workers have the second highest participation rate (44 percent), a significant increase from two years ago. There appear to be increases in most other occupational groups, including the retired. Only managers and supervisors do not now exceed their 1986 participation level.

Cultural Institutions and Continuing Education

We were interested in public attitudes towards the educational role of cultural institutions in continuing education. We asked how important each of eight different

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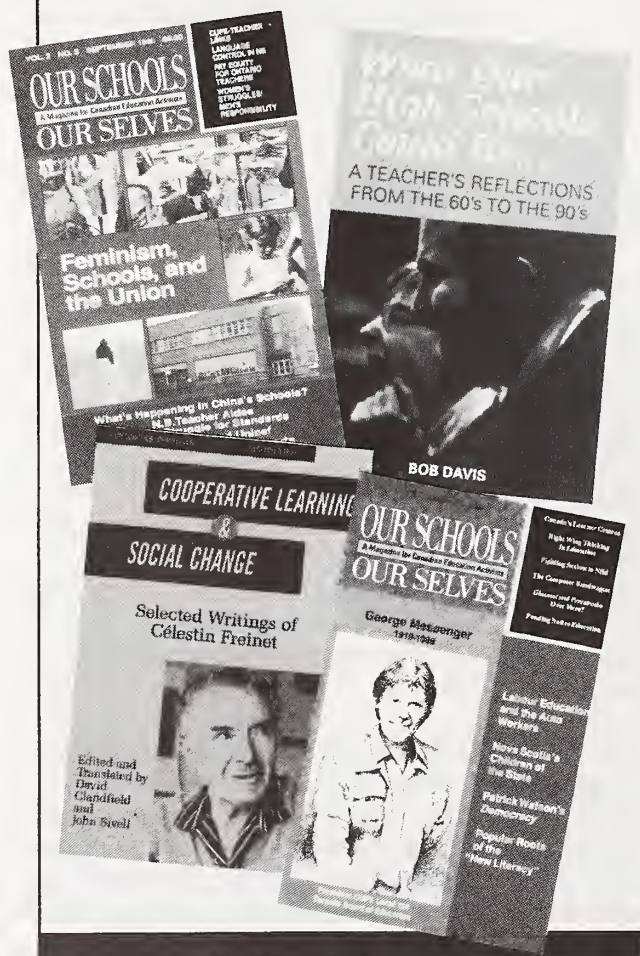


Table 34 "In the past year, have you taken any of the following types of adult or continuing education courses?"

	1986 %	1988 %	1990 %
Have taken a course	20	24	31
Job retraining	5	4	5
English as a second language (ESL)	<1	<1	1
Basic reading, writing and number skills	<1	<1	1
Courses toward a high school diploma	1	1	3
Courses toward a community college certificate or university degree	6	9	10
French as a second language (FSL)	2	2	2
General interest courses	9	10	14
None of the above	74	72	66
Not applicable/Still in school-university	3	4	3
N	1,042	1,011	1,032

Table 35 Participation in Adult Education by Background

	1986 %	1988 %	1990 %
Have taken a continuing education course			
All respondents	20	24	31
Age			
18 - 24	24	38	43
25 - 34	25	33	43
35 - 44	28	32	35
45 - 54	17	16	25
55 - 64	10	11	15
65 +	6	6	13
Education			
Elementary	3	5	5
High school incomplete	10	16	27
High school complete	14	23	26
Non-university postsecondary	31	35	37
University	31	36	43
Occupational class			
Corporate executives	20	28	26
Small employers	31	25	34
Self-employed	11	23	32
Managers	27	31	27
Supervisors	31	40	31
Professional employees	40	43	52
Service workers	25	30	44
Industrial workers	16	16	32
Unemployed	10	25	29
Homemakers	6	12	17
Retired	9	4	12
Students	21	40	51

Table 36 "How important do you think each of the following is in furthering the education of adults after completing their formal schooling?"

	Very important %	Fairly important %	Not very/ Not important %	Not important %	N
Public libraries	54	38	8	0	1,032
Educational TV	24	49	26	1	1,032
Science centres	19	51	29	1	1,032
Educational radio	15	40	42	3	1,032
Historic sites	13	42	44	1	1,032
Museums	6	40	54	0	1,032
Theatre	5	23	72	0	1,032
Art galleries	5	32	61	2	1,032

Table 37 "Have you ever followed (would you consider following) a course carried on educational television?"

	Yes	N
Have followed an educational television course		
1988	8	1,011
1990	14	1,032
Would consider following an educational television course		
1988	42	1,011
1990	46	1,032

Table 38 Interest In Following a Course on Educational Television by Background

	Would consider a TV course %	N
All respondents	46	1,032
Age		
18 - 24	48	149
25 - 34	60	256
35 - 44	50	203
45 - 54	49	128
55 - 64	35	140
65 +	21	145
Education		
Elementary	19	99
High school incomplete	41	168
High school complete	42	252
Non-university post-secondary	52	225
University	57	285
Family income		
Under \$20,000	27	123
\$20,000 to \$29,999	44	115
\$30,000 to \$39,999	51	138
\$40,000 to \$59,999	55	217
\$60,000 to \$79,999	55	123
\$80,000 +	55	118
Occupational class		
Corporate executives	51	109
Small employers	63	38
Self-employed	46	69
Managers	54	92
Supervisors	48	105
Professional employees	63	89
Service workers	43	113
Industrial workers	47	93
Homemakers	38	153
Unemployed	48	30
Retired	27	125
Student	51	75

cultural institutions or agencies were in furthering the education of adults after completing their formal schooling.

Table 36 presents the results. The highest importance is given to public libraries. An amazing 92 percent of respondents thought public libraries are either very important or fairly important in furthering the education of adults. Educational television and science centres are close behind with 73 percent and 70 percent of the respondents reporting that they are either very or fairly important. These two institutions are followed by historic sites and educational radio at 55 percent each. Museums, art galleries, and theatres have the smallest ratings. Only public libraries are

seen as very important by a majority of respondents.

If the results presented in Table 36 are compared with those in Table 16, we find that public libraries are viewed as the most important cultural institution for both adults and children. For the other comparable categories — museums, art galleries, and theatres — we find that they are felt to be more important for children than for adults.

Courses on Educational Television

In the past two surveys, we have asked whether respondents have ever followed courses on educational television and whether they would consider following a course on educational television. Table 37

reports the basic results. Fourteen percent of the respondents indicated that they had followed a course, while 46 percent indicated that they would consider following a course. In both cases, there are significant increases since 1988.

As with other participation questions, there are correlations between taking courses and certain background variables. While age is correlated with educational participation in general (see Table 35), it is not significant in terms of having *taken* an educational television course. Table 38 reports significant background variables associated with the willingness to *consider* taking a television course. Anticipated participation is generally inversely related

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to age, with the youngest categories (starting with 25-34) having the highest interest. The more education one has and the higher the family income one has, the more likely one is either to have taken a television course, or to consider taking a television course in the future.

The results for occupational class show that over 60 percent of small employers and professional employees, but only distinct minorities of homemakers and the retired, report that they would consider taking an educational television course. More respondents in northern Ontario have taken television courses (24 percent) and would consider taking such courses.

Table 39 indicates the kind of courses preferred by respondents. The highest interest is expressed for courses in business and management studies, followed closely by science and technology. Moderate interest is expressed for courses in personal finances, consumer affairs, health, and well-being. Less interest was expressed in courses

Table 39 "In which, if any, of the following subject areas would you be likely to follow a course on educational television?" (Percentages of people who indicated that they would consider such a course.)

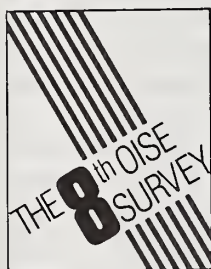
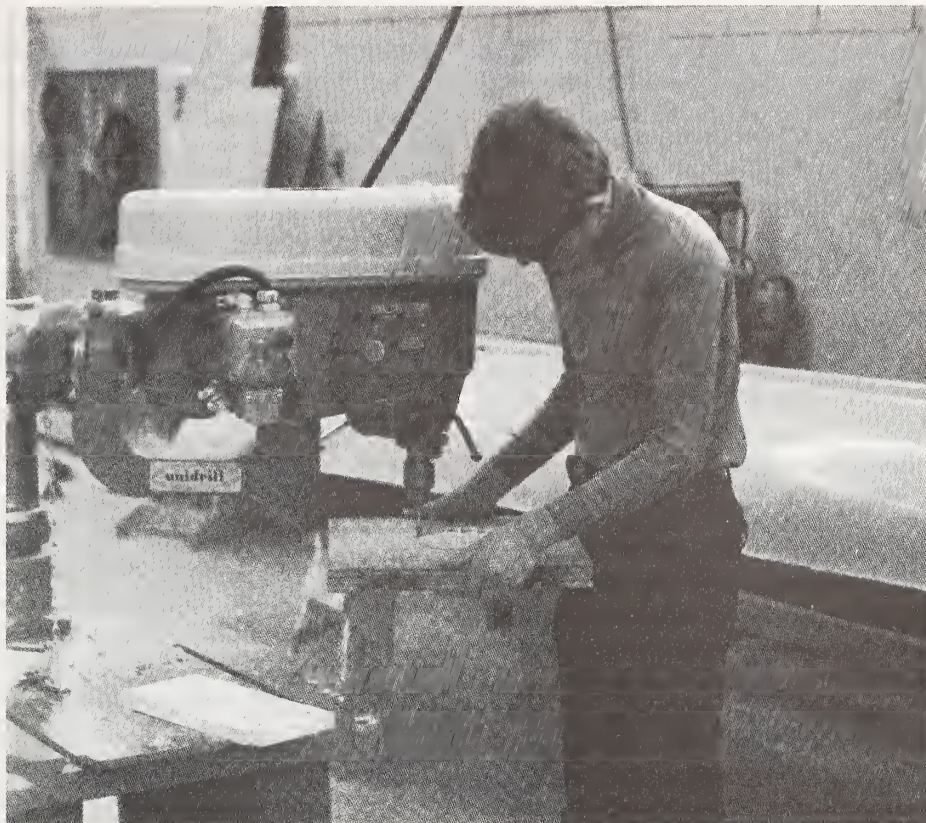
	%
Business & Management Studies	46
Science & Technology	40
Personal Finances, Consumer Affairs	38
Health and Well-Being	34
Personal Relationships, Family Relations, Parenting	27
Recreation, Sport, Hobbies	26
Political and Community Issues	23
Arts, Artists	21
Education, Teaching	19
N	474

Table 40 "In considering enrolling in a course offered on educational television, how important is it to you to get some form of credit towards a diploma, certificate or degree?"

	Very important %	Fairly important %	Not very/Not important %	Not stated %	N
All respondents	32	27	41	<1	474
Age					
18 - 24	41	28	32	0	71
25 - 34	36	28	35	1	153
35 - 44	35	30	35	1	102
45 - 54	30	28	42	0	63
55 - 64	18	18	64	0	49
65 +	8	23	69	0	31
Educational level					
Elementary	35	39	27	0	18
High school incomplete	47	20	32	1	89
High school complete	40	33	27	0	105
Non-university postsecondary	30	37	34	0	117
University	22	19	59	1	163
Family income					
Under \$20,000	60	12	28	0	33
\$20,000 to \$29,999	32	35	33	0	51
\$30,000 to \$39,999	29	36	35	0	70
\$40,000 to \$59,000	33	32	36	0	118
\$60,000 to \$79,000	37	24	38	0	68
\$80,000 +	22	19	58	1	64

in personal relationships, family relationships, parenting, recreation, sport, hobbies, arts and artists. The least amount of interest was expressed in education or teaching.

The results in Table 40 demonstrate that a substantial majority of interested respondents (59 percent) feel that credit for television courses is very important or fairly important, with about a third indicating that it is very important. There are significant correlations between the importance of credit and a number of background variables. The younger respondents feel that credit is very important or fairly important. Education level has an interesting pattern, with those respondents in the incomplete high school category having the highest interest in receiving credit, and with both elementary and postsecondary categories having significantly less interest in receiving credit. Finally, family income is inversely correlated with the desire for credit. Those with the lowest reported family income express the most interest in receiving credit while those with the highest income express the least.



Summary

There are numerous indications in the OISE surveys since 1978 of a growing popular faith in the capacity of education to provide some version of secular salvation. As we have noted in previous reports, public confidence in schools continues to increase in Canada, surpassing the respect for churches and most other institutions which continue to decline (see Gallup Canada, 1989; Gregg & Posner, 1990).

The current survey documents more fully than previously the emergence of a "permanent education culture" in Ontario — a multitude of assertions of widespread belief in the importance of educational pro-

grams, from cradle to grave and in diverse settings. Much of this growing faith in education appears to be economically motivated. To add just one more example, the overwhelming majority of Ontarians and other Canadians now believe that workers will have to take retraining courses in order for the country to remain competitive in global markets (Angus Reid Group, 1990). But, as the following summary of our specific findings should remind us, the Ontario public also remains divided over some of the educational policies actually required to sustain such a permanent education culture on principles of social equality.

Satisfaction with the school system in general has increased somewhat since 1988, with almost half of Ontarians now indicating that they are satisfied with the schools. Views on the changing quality of high schools have remained stable. About a quarter see improvement. The figure is slightly higher for elementary schools. Almost half of respondents think too little time is spent teaching students about social problems such as AIDS and drug abuse.

Small majorities of Ontarians continue to favour increased funding for education in general and for all levels of the formal school system, while larger majorities continue to want increased spending on adult literacy and retraining programs. There is somewhat less willingness to pay more taxes to support education, but probably a marginal increase in recent years. Most people would prefer to trade off increased spending on education against reduced spending in some other areas. A growing majority want to see the provincial share of school funding increase, and the majority support a proportionate share of commer-

cial tax pools for Catholic school boards. But Ontarians are currently deeply divided and uncertain about replacing household property taxes by education taxes on personal income. There is strong support for continuing and increasing government funding of the educational programs of cultural institutions beyond the schools, such as museums, science centres, and public art galleries.

Respondents are divided over whether tax-supported daycare centres should become part of the public school system. However, this proposal is supported by a narrow majority. An overwhelming majority think that smaller class sizes would improve students' progress in the early grades of elementary school. Opinion is divided over how effective simply spending more money per pupil would be; few respondents think starting school at an earlier age would be very effective in improving students' progress. Most respondents think province-wide tests should be used to assess the individual performance of students at the elementary level, but only a small minority believe that relying primarily on such tests is the best way to assess students' academic progress.

The public strongly supports an educational role for cultural institutions outside the schools, especially for public libraries and science centres. There is even stronger support for exposing elementary students to public libraries.

A small majority of Ontarians, up slightly from a decade ago, now think that there is a

class bias in Ontario schools against students from working class families. A substantial majority now favour at least delaying any streaming of students into postsecondary or vocational preparatory programs until Grade 10 or later, but public views are mixed on the effect that current efforts to defer streaming from Grade 9 to Grade 10 will have on the student dropout rate.

Half of the respondents think students are poorly prepared by the schools to decide whether or not to drop out before graduation. Opinion is evenly split on whether students are well or poorly prepared to decide about continuing their education after high school graduation. However, a majority think students are well prepared to make choices between attending university or community college. Two-thirds think most students are not ready to decide about continuing their education after high school graduation until senior grades.

Over half of the respondents think students are poorly prepared to make career choices. School guidance counsellors and employment counsellors outside the school are most frequently selected as the best sources of career advice; however, as sources of information on specific occupations, respondents most often choose people in these occupations or students' experiences in school-sponsored programs such as co-op education. A majority think co-op education is a great deal of help to students in making job choices.

Majority opposition to the imposition of

quotas on access to postsecondary institutions is stronger than it was a decade ago. Ontarians also now express extremely strong support for increasing the accessibility of a university education to community college students to universities through providing credit transfers.

The vast majority of Ontarians believe that work requires more skill than a generation ago, while smaller majorities feel that either community colleges or workplaces are the best sites for courses to upgrade their skills, and that employers rather than government or current workers should pay most of the costs. However, Ontarians continue to be deeply divided and uncertain about whether their own formal education entitles them to a better job.

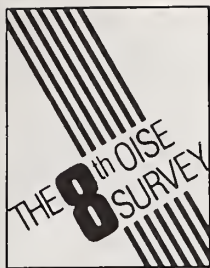
Almost half of respondents disagree that women university and community college graduates get jobs paying as well as those obtained by male graduates; a little over a third think pay equity has been achieved. About half support affirmative action for women in the hiring of elementary school principals. A growing majority think that the public has too little say in how schools are run. Only a third support teachers' right to strike; a majority remain opposed.

Reported participation in adult education has increased significantly in the past two years and this seems to be a trend. Current levels of participation indicate that approximately one out of every three adults took part in some form of adult or continuing education course in the past year. As in the past, participation is highest by the younger and more well to do members of the society, although increases are occurring in every category.

There is strong support for a continuing education role for certain cultural institutions. There is almost universal support for the role of public libraries, with strong support for science centres and educational television.

About one in seven respondents report ever having followed a course on educational television; about half would consider following such a course. The highest interest is in business and management studies, and science and technology courses. A majority of those interested in following a course report that getting a course credit is at least fairly important to them.





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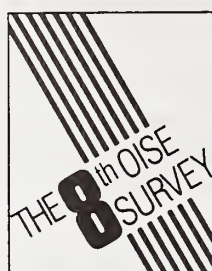
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Appendix

The Main Sample of the Adult Population of Ontario

The methodology of the 1990 survey was essentially the same as that used in the OISE surveys since 1979. The questionnaire was administered as a standard Gallup poll to a sample of 1,032 adult persons 18 years and over, Ontario residents, excluding those residing in institutions and in the far north. A modified probability sample was employed in population centres of over 1,000 persons and a quota sample in rural areas.

The 1990 sample was weighted to remedy slight imbalances in age and sex groups as follows:

	Male	Female
18 to 29 years	1.125	1.303
30 to 49 years	0.893	0.728
50 years and over	0.931	1.439

The weighted sample appears to somewhat underrepresent those with less than high school completion, and overrepresent those with postsecondary education. Detailed descriptions of the categories of background

variables, including occupational class, contact with schools and region, may be found in Livingstone, Hart, & Davie (1985).

The Supplementary Sample of Corporate Executives

A special survey of corporate executives has been conducted by mailed questionnaire in each year of the survey. The sample survey of corporate executives has been drawn from corporate directors resident in Ontario and engaged in managing corporations based in the province as listed in the *Financial Post Directory of Directors*, 1990. From this, a sample of 375 was drawn by simple random selection. We have received to date 109 valid responses and 8 returns to sender due to out of date addresses or changes in employment. Subtracting the latter from the original sample size, our response rate is approximately 30 percent.

Sampling Tolerances

In this study, the opinions and preferences of 1,032 respondents are taken to represent those of all adult residents in Ontario. In the case of findings for subgroups, the numbers are even smaller — 533 women represent

all women in the province. For any sample survey, it can be expected that there will be differences between the findings for these relatively small numbers of representatives and the results of which would have been obtained if the entire population had been surveyed.

Table A provides estimates of error for any percentage taken by itself. For example, in Table 1 (see page 2), which presents findings on public satisfaction with the school system in general, 47 percent of all respondents in 1990 stated that they were satisfied. The estimate of the possible sampling error for this statistic is found in Table A at the intersection of the row for "percentages near 50" and the column for sample size of 1,000 (since the percentage is based on the entire sample of 1,032).

The estimate of sampling error is 4 percent; that is, if the survey had covered the entire population of Ontario, chances are 95 in 100 that the percentage satisfied with the school system in general would have fallen between 43 percent and 51 percent.

Tables B and C provide estimates of sampling error for the differences between two percentages rather than for the size of any one percentage. The question here is "how large must a difference between the percentages of two groups (for example, those 18-24 years of age and those over 65) be before we can have confidence that the difference is real and not the product of sampling error? Again, as for Table A, the level of confidence is set at 95 percent. As in the case for single percentages, by adding and subtracting the error estimate from the obtained difference in the survey, an interval can be constructed which has a 95 percent probability of containing the actual differences between the two sub-populations. The size of the sampling error increases as the percentages involved (not the differences between them) approach 50 percent, and particularly as the number of respondents on which they are based decreases.

Whereas in Table A percentage sizes defined rows of estimates on the table, here the problem is handled by providing two tables: Table B for use where the percentages are close to 20 or 80 percent; Table C where they approach 50 percent.

The rows and columns in each table are

Table A Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of a Percentage

In Percentage Points (At 95 in 100 Confidence Level)						
Sample Size		1,000	600	400	200	100
Percentages near	10	2	4	4	5	7
	20	3	4	5	7	9
	30	4	5	6	8	10
	40	4	5	6	9	11
	50	4	5	6	9	11
	60	4	5	6	9	11
	70	4	5	6	8	10
	80	3	4	5	7	9
	90	2	4	4	5	7

Table B Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of a Difference Between Percentages, Where Percentages Are Near 20 or 80 Percent

In Percentage Points (At 95 in 100 Confidence Level)						
Sample Size		600	400	200	100	50
600		7				
400		7	7			
200		8	8	10		
100		10	10	11	13	
50		13	13	14	15	18

Table C Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of a Difference Between Percentages, Where Percentages Are Near 50 Percent

In Percentage Points (At 95 in 100 Confidence Level)						
Sample Size		600	400	200	100	50
600		7				
400		8	8			
200		10	10	12		
100		12	12	14	16	
50		16	16	17	19	22

defined by the number of respondents on which the percentages are based. To find the appropriate sampling error estimate, first select Table B or C based on the size of the percentages being compared. Next, on that table select a row based on the size of one subgroup being compared (for example, those age 18-24), and a column based on the size of the second subgroup (for example, those 65 or older). The number in the table which belongs to *both* the row and the column selected is the appropriate sample of error estimates.

It will become clear in practice that the reader will have to use some judgment in deciding cases where percentages or sample

sizes are intermediate between those provided in tables of error estimates. Such choices are basically between lesser or greater estimates of error and, hence, between more or less conservative interpretations of the survey findings.

It should be noted that the error estimates themselves are based on a simple random sampling procedure. The more complex sampling procedures used in this survey introduce further uncertainties regarding the size of sampling errors. Conservative interpretations are recommended, and have been used here generally in identifying significant subgroup differences in this text.

The 1990 OISE Survey

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

The OISE Survey of Educational Issues represents a valuable contribution to our knowledge of people's attitudes to education in Ontario. A major finding of this year's survey is the public recognition of a "permanent education culture."

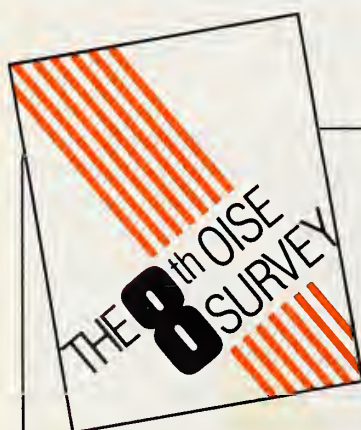
Certainly for the adult education community, this recognition has long been coming. (It has been nearly two decades since a report on informal educational activity called *The Learning Society* made its appearance in Ontario.) But now it is apparent that Ontario citizens realize that cultural institutions like public libraries, museums and science centres, educational television, and indeed the workplace are all parts of the learning environment. Further, they see these institutions as needing the attention and support of government as well as recognition by the formal system of schools, colleges, and universities.

Though it is comforting to know that people are pleased to have their tax money go to public education, we should realize that they are losing patience with policies and procedures which they find unreasonable. Ontarians, for example, find it unreasonable for one institution (a university) not to accept the prior learning that is done at another institution (a college).

But it is not only the needs of adult learners that are now being recognized; the needs of the very young, particularly for smaller class sizes, are also seen as pre-eminent. Now that daycare is an integral part of children's learning, it is our responsibility to ensure that these early experiences are of the highest quality. The experts are now reinforcing our commonsense notions that learning begins at birth, is essential throughout a working life, and can be a determining factor in how long life goes on.

As we seek to set priorities for a new decade, the findings of the Eighth OISE Survey should certainly be of widespread interest.

Walter Stewart



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